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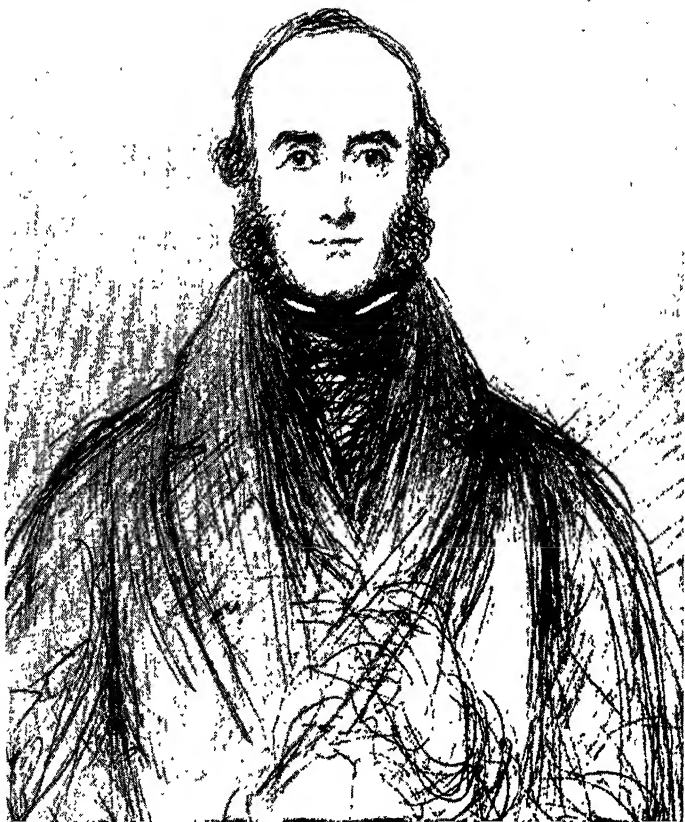


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THE ENGLISH  
COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

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LORD GEORGE BENTINCK

# THE ENGLISH COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

*A Study of Nineteenth Century Types*

BY  
CHESTER KIRBY

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## PREFACE

THE essays here published are preliminary studies in a more ambitious project of research concerned with the general history of the English country gentleman class. In preparing them the author has received invaluable assistance from the libraries of the British Museum, Harvard University, and Brown University. In particular he wishes to express his appreciation of the permission granted by Sir E. John Russell, Director of the Rothamsted Experimental Station, to publish the extracts from the Rothamsted Correspondence which are to be found in the fifth chapter.



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## CHAPTER I

### CLASSES, TYPES, AND INDIVIDUALS

IN those distant decades when the War had not yet disillusioned the world, there flourished a naïve practice known as composite photography. It consisted in collecting camera portraits of a number of persons who were supposed to have something in common, as living the same kind of life, carrying out the same kind of work, or exhibiting the same characteristics of intelligence or the want of it, then superimposing the negative plates, properly centred, on each other, and exposing the usual sensitized paper to whatever light could find its way through the combined obscurities. Strangely enough this procedure had a serious creative purpose. The resultant composite was supposed to reveal the abstract appearance of the individuals involved. It was, in short, a generalization from a number of specific instances.

Unfortunately abstract photography proved to be a fad of no great permanence. The difficulty of deciding whether to centre the plates by the nose, the eye, or the chin, the problem of making large and small heads the same size, and the discovery that the results showed no recognizable pattern proved too much for it.

But the idea behind it was a perfectly legitimate one. It was an attempt to arrive at what was basic in a group of people. Any discussion of a social class involves something of the same process. The very conception of a class presupposes interests, activities, and relationships in common. It presupposes, likewise, a large number of individuals, each of whom possesses his own characteristics and each of whom by his peculiarities falsifies, in however slight a measure, the general character. On this account it is often said that every generalization is unsound. But to say so is consequently an unsound generalization in itself, about which therefore we need not greatly trouble ourselves.

If, then, it is legitimate to attempt the abstract description of a social class, it is also hazardous. One of the first principles of successful composite photography lies in the necessity for restricting the number of individual portraits employed. Otherwise the final result proves to be only a useless blur. Fortunately it is possible to distinguish sub-types, or types within the class itself, and thus secure the necessary illustrations without too great a complexity. Among the landed class in England as it was during the last century, several types of country gentlemen were to be found. The grandee and the small squire, although both members of the landed interest, had many obvious differences from each other. The agriculturist and the sportsman

were not by any means always distinguishable in the individual, but the farming gentleman who devoted himself wholly to the pursuit of agriculture travelled a decidedly different path in life from that of the man who allowed sport to absorb all his interests. And among sportsmen themselves the tendency to specialization is readily noticeable.

The history of the English landed classes of the nineteenth century remains, of course, to be written. It is too great a task for the scope of such a work as this. But in the meantime this attempt at a bit of composite photography may not be altogether amiss. And as the first necessity for such an experiment is the possession of clear portraits, the likenesses have been drawn with what precision of detail the circumstances permit. The country gentlemen chosen illustrate, though in an inadequate degree, the variety of interests which English country gentlemen had: the farmers, the squires, the grandees, the magistrates, the business men, the politicians, the statesmen, the reformers, the authors, the men of the turf, those of the hunting field, and the devotees of the gun.

It may be asked, who were the country gentlemen? It must be admitted that many of them were far from living all their lives in the country. The landed interest, nevertheless, had a very definite existence in nineteenth century England. The owners of landed estates large

enough to enable them to live by their rents if they so chose constituted in great measure the governing class of Georgian and Victorian England. They and their immediate families, comprising both nobility and gentry, were the aristocracy, distinguished from the other agricultural classes and from the urban bourgeoisie and proletariat, and for want of a better name have been called country gentlemen.

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## CHAPTER II

### LORD GEORGE BENTINCK

RARELY has the past produced a ruling class fully comparable to the landed aristocracy of England. Its staying power, in the face of the most extreme changes in the country's economic life, has rendered it nearly unique. During the Victorian era, notwithstanding that the heyday of the eighteenth century had passed by, never to return until perhaps the collapse of western civilization shall again establish feudal conditions, this class still ruled in a not quite empty sense. The country gentlemen were the magistrates, the solons, and the clergy ; and that they were not also to any great extent the statesmen of the first rank only enhances the mystery of their persistence.

Not the least part of this mystery is bound up in the sudden and startling career of Benjamin Disraeli's friend and stepping-stone, Lord George Bentinck. If Disraeli found it pleasant to mount to leadership of the Protectionist Party through the very convenient and most timely death of his friend, he repaid the debt handsomely by making Lord George a character in which he has lived snugly for some four score of years. Lord George Bentinck became almost a myth after the

*Political Biography*, really but a novelist-politician's pamphlet, issued from the press in December 1851; and the reticences, the restraint, the omissions served admirably to fulfil what the author once described as the function of language, namely, the concealment of his real thoughts, and to throw around his subject a glamour which endures to this day.

Yet Lord George Bentinck's years of political obscurity have a very real significance, not only as explaining the scant three years of questionable statesmanship with which his life ended, but as exemplifying a whole type of his class. For he was truly a country gentleman, and an aristocrat of the aristocrats. Born in 1802 as the third son of the fourth Duke of Portland, he was assured of every advantage which a great name, wealth, and high connections could supply. His mother had before her marriage been "the rich Miss Scott", whose sister, "the witty Miss Scott", so appropriately married the sardonic George Canning. If fate at the start qualified her favour in any measure it did so in making him the third son, with two brothers between him and the dukedom, so that throughout his life he was to be known as Lord George only by the fiction of courtesy.

Younger sons sometimes led a hard life among the country gentlemen. While they cannot perhaps be described as just so much lumber cluttering the stately mansions, they became

really valuable only when their elder brothers died, and but one of the two did so in the case of Lord George. But hardship was not his lot and he was treated like his brothers. Apparently destined for no great career, he remained quietly at home during his youth, received there a smattering of education, and thus confused later tradition, which tried to place him more appropriately in Eton and Christ Church, Oxford.

Younger sons were always a problem, and the problem could usually be solved only by making them statesmen, clergymen, or soldiers. Those who showed talent for leadership became Members of Parliament; those who had intellectual inclinations were made priests; those who remained became soldiers. Lord George entered the army in 1818 as lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards, transferring next year to the Tenth Hussars. It was a career, but hardly an inspiring one in a time of such perversely uninterrupted peace, and the officers varied their tedium perforce with duels and practical jokes. The nickname George the Second, which clung to him for a time among his fellow officers, arose out of an amusing affair in which he acted as second to one of his fellow officers. On another occasion, long remembered by his fellow-officer, Grantley Berkeley, Lord George's room in the Chatham barracks was filled with chickens, stray dogs, and a billy goat, which greeted him with a variety of calls and commotions when he



returned in the dead of night from a dinner party. The violence with which he roared for vengeance on the practical jokers and the moodiness which he displayed the next day in the face of sly winks and solicitous questions about his comfort, may perhaps presage the later arrogance and fierceness of temper which made him the terror of all who had the misfortune to cross his path.

Indeed little record outside the army lists remains of this military life but the evidence of friction. It is unfortunate for his reputation that England temporarily had tired of warring with her equals and required her army only as a dumb show or as a means of keeping in order a set of distant colonies which could not supply the elegancies of life in London. For Lord George Bentinck would have made a great warrior, if not a great general. As it was, his service was spent in brawls and quarrels, and at least one duel.

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But, despite advance to a captaincy and ultimately a majority, his was not destined to be a military career. He had not been long in the army before fate, without entirely separating him from the position of an officer, which he retained nominally until 1835, dealt him one of those curious turns of fortune which always baffle the speculative historian. In those days

among the aristocracy one never advanced but by ability amounting almost to genius or by the assistance of one's relatives, especially if one happened to be a Whig. Thus it was that George Canning, who had ability, took as his military secretary his nephew, Lord George, who had influence. Canning had been appointed Governor-General of India and they were to set out for that vast Oriental empire, where anything might happen. But it seemed that startling events were not restricted to the East. Lord Londonderry, Canning's old rival, slashed his throat with a razor, Canning succeeded to his place, and Lord George shortly found himself acting as private secretary to England's Foreign Minister.

There is some obscurity about the course of events at this point. It appears that the transition from military secretary to private secretary did not take place merely as a matter of course. Indeed, the first offer of the private secretaryship, which was made to the Duke of Portland for his two sons, John (later called Lord Titchfield) and George, was refused by the Duke on political grounds. Lord George subsequently allowed himself to be persuaded by Canning and accepted the position, his brother still refusing. This was in November 1822. But it was not until March 6th in the following year that Lord George's transfer to half pay in the army, as required by the private secretaryship, was completed. Presumably the interval

was taken care of by absence on leave from active service. After hardly more than a year he returned to the active list, on April 24th, 1824, this time in the Life Guards. This must have involved a resignation of his position with Canning. And finally, after another transfer, he retired on half pay as a major, unattached, in February 1826. As Greville, writing some twenty years later, stated that Lord George became private secretary to Canning at the time of his Prime Ministership, it would seem that Lord George worked with him during two periods, not only in 1823, but again in 1826-7.

Be that as it may, it is certain that Lord George, for a time at least, served in this capacity. It was not much, perhaps, but it saved him from India, this position as secretary to the Secretary. To a more energetic man it would have spelled opportunity, and he had the more incentive to make the most of it as he held his famous relative in the highest esteem. But there are limits even to family influence. Later commentators reported that Canning had predicted great things for him in politics, if he would only apply himself earnestly. This prophecy, from distaste, bashfulness, or indolence, he forbore to put to the test. But if he did not pursue politics, politics did pursue him. Membership in the ruling class entailed certain obligations, and one of these consisted in filling the rôle, if not of an active, at least of a voting, Member of Parliament. When the family

borough of King's Lynn became available for him in 1828, Lord George accordingly was made its representative in the House of Commons.

As a statesman he failed from the outset ; as a voter in the division lobbies he had no equal. Nor did he altogether lack the zeal requisite for success, for as early as 1828 when the Duke of Richmond, his friend, wished to move for the appointment of a Select Committee on the wool trade, he prepared the material which the noble duke presented for his case in the House of Lords, and thus supplied the first recorded example of that summing and calculating system of politics for which Lord George subsequently became so famous.

The Reform Bill crisis jarred him into his first really serious political activity. The Whiggism of the Portland house made him a supporter, though none too enthusiastic, of the Reform Bill. With characteristically sudden energy he exerted himself at King's Lynn to secure the nomination of a suitable colleague in the person of Lord William Pitt Lennox. But, always a patrician, he was far from any leanings to democracy and, despite his father's craven advice that no resistance be shown to the extreme demands lest violence and revolution break out, Lord George voted for the Chandos clause, which was intended to preserve to the country gentlemen something at least of their control over the rural constituencies.

It was, indeed, this control, and hardly anything else, that he represented. Lord George had little of the ordinary wiles with which politicians recommend themselves to the voters. The work of office was a burden to be avoided, inquiries from supporters were insults, dancing at public balls a horror, public speaking an agony. When he found himself obliged to attend a ball at Lynn he said, "Now I must go and do duty. What a bore." When he rose to address a political meeting the perspiration poured down his face, his voice rose to a squeak, and his thoughts retired into the innermost recesses of his mind, whence they could be brought forth only with the assistance of much humming and hawing. But if he did not display the fripperies of statesmanship he did show, as no one could doubt who witnessed his agony, the utmost of courage, frankness, and political integrity. And, after all, he was a country gentleman, and no more was required in King's Lynn, not even intelligence or vision.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Lord George did not for the time being cut any great figure in the House of Commons. A few remarks during 1833 sufficed to acquaint the reformed House with his views on the coercion of Belgo-Dutch affairs and his opinion in favour of extending the restrictions on beer shops. The proposal for disfranchising the freemen of Liverpool on grounds of corruption supplied a subject more

suited to his calculating genius and he regaled his hearers at length with figures to show how 1,800 apprentices and 196 new freemen would be deprived of their votes along with the 1,882 old freemen who were guilty ; but he received short shrift and the mathematical system of politics had perforce to wait until Cobden and Gladstone coupled it with something like eloquence before it had a vogue.

Still his connections, both in the aristocratic and in the sporting world, and his recognized integrity made him a factor of some consequence in politics. As Lord Stanley's close friend and ally he was welcomed by the Conservatives when Lord Stanley deserted the Liberals, and by 1841 he had already earned the enviable reputation of being " the most bigoted and violent of Tories". Sir Robert Peel's offer of a post in the Government he refused only " from a total disinclination to the cares and troubles of office ". Accordingly the caricatures drawn by " H.B." show him, not a primary figure, but always an earnest attendant upon the processes of political life, a tall man with side whiskers, a short heavy coat, and an air of having just arrived from Newmarket.

\* \* \*

For his soul was in horse-racing. Like most country gentlemen who could sit astride a horse or drag themselves through the fields Lord George

was a sportsman from early manhood, and in this realm none of that lethargy and sensitiveness seemed to affect him which made politics a bore. For a time he showed catholic tastes, hunting six days a week, shooting over spaniels and pointers, and even dabbling at boating. But before long he succumbed to the fascination of horse-racing, the sport which was to make his name at once the symbol of turf enthusiasm and the terror of all shady bookmakers. It was perhaps inevitable that he should have full opportunity to discover this passion. His father always kept a good stable at Welbeck, which was, after all, located but a short distance from Doncaster. Tiresias, from that stable, had won the Derby in 1819 and was still to be seen in his stall there until he died in 1836.

It need not be surprising, then, that Lord George's name soon appeared in the annals of racing. In those days, when gentlemen riders were by no means unknown, one of the favourite Goodwood events was the Cocked Hat Stakes. Mr. Poyntz of Cowdray, who was entertaining Lord George during the meet in 1824, unexpectedly requested him to ride his mare Olive in the race. Before the event took place the next day Lord George had secured his riding gear from London, got from a rural hatter the necessary cocked hat which all riders must wear in this contest, and induced one of the ladies' maids at Cowdray to make him a silk

jacket. So decked, with his tall frame and long legs and arms he made such a poor figure that the Goodwood party put all their money on his rival, Captain Frederick Berkeley, but after two dead heats a third obliged them to disgorge.

As with so many lovers of horses and racing Lord George soon fell victim to the amusing fallacy that a man who knows horses can make a profit by habitually backing his judgment of their merits against the judgment of others. Since his father knew better he was obliged at first to indulge this vice with some circumspection and secrecy. For while he might, within the limits of his resources, make his bets in private he could never be satisfied with less than actually owning some of the competing horses. It is elementary that no man can be so well acquainted with a horse's merits as its owner. Thus it was that horses began to run on various tracks in the name of Lord Lichfield, the Duke of Richmond, and Charles Greville, or even the names of John Bowe, the hotel keeper, and John Day, the trainer, when the real owner, as everyone except the Duke of Portland knew, was Lord George Bentinck.

In short, no one pursued the sport more assiduously than he did. At Newmarket Charles James Fox had been accustomed to follow the last stretch of the races by riding abreast of the horses at a tremendous pace as they passed the judge's stand. Lord George for a time followed this precedent and his white-coated figure



became a familiar sight at the end of races until one day the judge, finding his decision disputed, defended himself by observing that he ought really to have awarded first place to "a tall gentleman in a white macintosh". It was in vain that he lost on a single race in 1826 a sum reported at £27,000 and was obliged to apply to his mother and sister for assistance. It was equally in vain that the Duke bought him an estate in Scotland to divert his interest and exacted a promise to abandon gambling for the future. The Duke of Richmond soon shared a few horses with him ; then Lord George purchased a few on his own account and ran them in the name of his friend. By the middle of the thirties the promise was all but forgotten.

It was about this time that he put his horses into the hands of John Barham Day, the most noted trainer of the times. Honest John, as he was called, a solemn, black-coated man, had already jockeyed and trained for Lord George's father, and enjoyed the confidence of two other great patrons in Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston. With Lord George, who spared no expense, his establishment became greater than ever before. The paddocks and training stables at Danebury were extended, fresh gallops were made, new land was turned into exercise grounds. Fifteen hundred pounds, it was said, were expended for bone dust in the interest of the turf.

Nor did he want for a return. The years of his Danebury epoch, from 1836 to 1840, while not bringing a Derby victory, gave him many other triumphs. Grey Momus in 1838 won the Two Thousand Guineas, the Ascot Cup, and five other races. Later Crucifix carried off the stakes of the Two Thousand Guineas, the One Thousand Guineas, and the Oaks, running eleven races in succession without defeat. While these and other victories by no means meant that he was sweeping the field, still with not more than a dozen horses running he was making a very creditable showing.

\* \* \*

But quarrels soon developed. Lord George could never be satisfied with only a few victories. He had plunged into the game with an energy and a determination of which no one who knew him in politics could ever have dreamed him capable. It made him furious to discover that John Day's son was betting against his horses, and still more so to hear Day himself refuse to adopt a ruse which Lord George conceived for the purpose of misleading the touts. It was charged later that Honest John had written letters of opposite tenor about one of Lord George's horses, one to his betting agent and one to Lord George, and then made the mistake of putting them into the wrong envelopes ; but this

is difficult to believe, as Lord George would certainly have exposed Day without mercy. In any case the Danebury era came to an end and the horses were removed in 1841 to a scene of greater efforts, if somewhat slighter triumphs, at Goodwood.

Lord George's conduct in this connection was of a piece with that toward other people. He was nothing if not quarrelsome. A speculator on the turf—and Lord George was accustomed to bet on a grand scale—must expect frequent disappointments of a sort to gall any but the most philosophic spirit. But he was no philosopher and he lived at a time when the turf was overrun with touts, defaulters, and tricksters. His suspicious and domineering nature completely destroyed the good relations between himself and his cousin, Charles Greville. Lord George had for some time been running horses in Greville's name, and the two had presented to the admiring world an interesting spectacle of mutual confidence and devotion; but when in 1835 Greville thwarted some of Lord George's plans in connection with *Preserve* he was assailed with all the ferocious abuse and resentment which later became so familiar on the political stage. The hostility wore off in time and in 1837 the two co-operated in exploiting what the devotees of the turf would call the going qualities of Greville's *Mango*, Lord George picking up fourteen thousand pounds by backing his first-hand

knowledge. The race, the St. Leger, did not take place without some accusation of trickery from the outside, but this affected the two conspirators not at all.

Still the mutual confidence, once disturbed, could never be completely restored. Coolness arose again when Lord George did not seem to reciprocate with the co-operative spirit and tried to monopolize the advantages of his famous Crucifix. In 1842 the break became permanent. The two taking opposite views concerning a certain defaulting scandal, Lord George broke out against his cousin with all the violence characteristic of him, so that from that moment there was no further hope of reconciliation. They took opposite sides in the debates before the Jockey Club, and Lord George, construing one of Greville's speeches as a personal insult, cut him dead.

Colonel Anson, prince of mediators, attempted to bring them together again, persuading them to meet after one of the races at Goodwood and shake hands. Eager and anxious, Greville waited at the appointed spot, but the moment Lord George saw him all his cherished resentment, his unreasoning fury, and his unjustifiable contempt boiled up in an instant and he refused like a surly schoolboy to advance the remaining steps. It was perhaps unfortunate that the two men were cousins, as their relationship prevented either from challenging the other without,

however, preventing the feeling that a duel and a mortal wound would be perfectly justified. As it was, Lord George hugged the bitterness closely in his breast and finally carried it with him to his early grave. At least one observer remembered for many years the fiendish joy which the one cousin took in the misfortunes of the other, at the Merry Monarch's Derby (1845). Lord George, sitting within a few feet of Greville, was watching the race through his glasses when he observed one of the horses fall. In that cold, taunting, high-pitched voice which carried so much contempt, he remarked, "One of them is down ; I think it is Mr. Greville's Alarm."

George Osbaldeston, commonly known as the Squire, was more fortunate in being free to call out Lord George. The classic duel which ensued arose out of an affair at Heaton Park in September 1835. For some time the outsiders who attended the races there had cherished the conviction that the guests of Lord Wilton, owner of the course, were commonly and unfairly favoured in the handicapping of the horses, and Squire Osbaldeston had determined to secure revenge for the popular party, whose headquarters were at Manchester. By secretly holding back his Irish colt, Rush, during a public trial and on the first day of the races, he was able to secure a favourable handicap and long odds for his supporters on the second day, when he won the

Cup race in a canter to the dismay and rage of the exclusive set.

One of the many heavy bets against Rush had been laid by Lord George Bentinck at odds variously reported at from 400 to 1 to 200 to 100. For some reason, probably the Squire's intense love of fox hunting, the two did not meet again until the Craven meeting at Newmarket in the spring of 1836, when Osbaldeston asked him for the money. The Squire himself has described the scene :

"He was standing in the betting yard with his back to the railings, looking very black, with a sort of savage smile on his countenance, not uncommon to him. I went up to him and said, 'My lord, I believe you owe me £200 which you lost to me on the Cup at Heaton Park.' He stared at me, and answered : 'I wonder you have the impudence and the assurance to ask me for that money. A greater robbery was never committed by any man on the public ; and the Jockey Club think so, too ; and I have a great mind not to pay you at all.' I observed : 'You must pay me. You don't think, my lord, that this matter will end here. You will hear from me, and I beg you to understand that I consider myself quite as much of a gentleman as either you or any of the Jockey Club although I have not got a title attached to my name.' He then said : 'I suppose you can count ?' and I said, 'Yes, I could at Eton.' [Lord George had never attended school.] Unbuttoning his coat, he took some notes from his pocket and paid me."

But it proved a difficult matter to bring Lord George to the duelling field. The Squire was known to be such an expert pistol shot, a marksman who thought nothing of flying birds or the

ace of diamonds at thirty paces, that it was considered almost certain death to face him. Opinion was against him and he had difficulty in finding a second. Then Lord George, acting no doubt on the advice of his friends, who were frantic at the appalling prospect,—as Lord George was an indifferent shooter at best,—declared that his opponent had lost all claim to the character of a gentleman and was not entitled to satisfaction. This ruse the Squire disposed of summarily by threatening to pull Lord George's nose as soon as he should see him ; and the duel was arranged, the infuriated fox hunter swearing to kill the lord like a dog, and his best friend turning from him in disgust. In the end Lord George, a cold and scornful icicle on the outside and a cauldron of boiling hatred within, stood up to receive his fire. Fortunately the seconds by a ruse prevented the shots from taking effect.

It would be difficult to say that either party came out of the affair creditably. There was no question of courage, though one may perhaps best think of it as a kind of Dutch courage supplied by a concentrated distillation of bile running like fire through the brains and hearts of these deluded creatures. But the cause cannot be thought a very noble one. The Squire, to be sure, had been publicly insulted. Lord George took a high and mighty attitude, and Sir Theodore Cook has declared that he “deliberately

risked his life for what he considered to be the principles of honest betting on the Turf . . . .” But, he adds, these were “principles which he allowed no man except himself to interpret”. When the unfairness at Heaton Park operated in his favour Lord George insulted no one, but when he himself was tricked he called the process robbery. This tendency to take high moral ground, and no doubt quite sincerely, appeared on many occasions, but essentially his attitude was that which he expressed later in connection with the Corn Laws : “What I cannot bear is being sold.”

Perhaps it would have been better if more of Lord George’s quarrels had ended in duels. In this case the encounter enabled him to vent his indignation sufficiently so that a reconciliation became possible. The opportunity came a few years later, when the Squire, who was a member of the Bibury Club of amateur jockeys, generously refrained from blackballing the candidacy of Lord George. In return Lord George invited his former opponent to visit his stables, then still at Danebury. But the depth of this peace-making may be judged from his free admission to his trainer in 1845 that he desired to win no man’s money more keenly than the Squire’s, unless it was Greville’s. When his John o’ Gaunt beat Osbaldeston’s Sorella his usual imperturbability in the presence of victory gave place to high elation.

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It was in the autumn of 1841, four years before this race, that Lord George had moved his horses to Goodwood and ushered in the period of his greatest activity and fame in horse-racing. The Duke of Richmond, whose ancestral estate Goodwood was, had long been his friend. Not infrequently he had lent his name as a stalking horse in the days of Lord George's anonymity on the turf. Observing the excellent condition of horses trained at Goodwood, Lord George had come to the conclusion that its high situation and unrivalled turf, on which training could be continued uninterruptedly throughout the winter months, rendered it a supremely desirable location. He encountered a difficulty at first in the Duke's objection to the continued loan of his name as well as his stables, but this difficulty was overcome when Lord George made his peace with his father. For the Duke of Portland inevitably discovered that the mysterious horse-owners in the racing lists, some of whom he had never heard of, were but his own son in disguise, and after a furious storm over Lord George's forgotten promise, bowed to the inevitable. Thus it was that the Duke of Richmond's trainer carried off Lord George's string from Danebury to the accompaniment of jeers from John Day's stable lads, the Danebury feud was confirmed, and the fortunes of the Rothschild of the Turf were joined to the glories of Goodwood.

Any enthusiasms could be forgiven in such a scene. Situated at the top of the downs, just below the prehistoric fortifications of the Trundle, the course gives a magnificent view on the south, stretching away over the most charming country in the world to Chichester cathedral, six miles away, and on for twenty miles or more of sea, which merges mysteriously in the distance with the sky. At the left an avenue of lofty beeches leads away to Goodwood House, a mile distant. On the north the down slopes sharply into the valley, where lies the village of Singleton. Here Lord George made his headquarters during part of this period, and many must have been the times that he climbed the road running up to the course and the paddocks.

But there is no evidence that Lord George Bentinck cared a rap for scenery. He was interested simply in the superior advantages of Goodwood as a training ground, and he proceeded to exploit these to a degree never before dreamed of. There were soon as many as six score horses in the stables preparing for competition, most of them belonging to him. With the consent of the Duke of Richmond he carried through an extensive expansion of the accommodation. In order to construct a totally new and perfect gallop a mile and a half long he employed over a hundred labourers and twenty-eight cart horses, uprooted large numbers of huge timber trees, laid turf the whole length, and spread hundreds

of tons of tan carted from Chichester to provide the necessary springiness. Pluming himself on the immense public benefit arising out of his giving so much employment, he supervised the work with the closest personal attention, and spent hours every day directing every detail. To offset the immense expense he consoled himself with the visions of the many races which he expected to win. A single victory would erase all the £3,500 expended on the Halnaker Gallop.

This feverish activity is only suggestive of the many changes which he introduced into the technique of horse-racing. As early as 1836, when he was already intimately connected with Goodwood but had not yet established himself there, he introduced the practice of vanning. One of his promising horses at the time was Elis, of which he desired to take the utmost possible advantage. Two difficulties stood in the way, first the physical limitations of an animal which might be worn out before its time, and second, the distance of one race course from another. For the first he cared little, as he was accustomed to use his horses without stint as he did himself, with the result that both he and they were exhausted before either reached what should have been the greatest development of their powers.

For dealing with the problem of distance it was customary at the time to walk horses from one course to another, an inconceivably primitive

procedure. Lord George had a van built, and after winning two races at the Goodwood meeting and another at Lewes only a few days before the Doncaster meeting, loaded Elis and The Drummer into his cumbrous contraption, drawn by six horses. The journey, ordinarily one of over two weeks, was completed in three days, to the amazement and bewilderment of the Doncaster fraternity. The odds fluctuated violently and the opinion was soon general that, although Elis had arrived in the rear of six horses, he would win the St. Leger in the lead of twice as many. Popular opinion, or rather popular fear, was never more completely justified, and Lord George became almost fanatical in his faith in vans.

In like manner he went to extremes in the care of his horses at Goodwood. For a time those which were delicate were fed on peas and beans ; then on flour-and-water gruel ; and finally on milk and flour, with a dozen eggs added to each feed of corn. Cows were purchased. Eggs, initialled to guarantee freshness, were ordered from the farmers. But in spite of a victory or two the expense and labour were too enormous. The Duke of Richmond began to fear for his farm and poultry yard, as well as his stables, and the milk and eggs at least were stopped.

In short, Lord George was completely wrapped up in his infatuation for the turf. If genius

consisted, as has been said by some *cliché*-maker, in an infinite capacity for taking pains, he would have been the greatest genius of the century. This tall, elegant aristocrat, dressed in a long black coat, velvet waistcoat, and black trousers, with a gold chain and a satin scarf about his neck, a costume which he wore even in the paddock, would follow a promising yearling about, rattling a stick in his hat and watching the form of a possible Derby winner as if life itself depended on his making the correct judgment. His letters to his trainers were marvels of prosiness about the comparative weights and past performances of horses. And more often than not they were written at eight o'clock in the morning. John Day admitted that he could not read them through. The two John Kents, trainers at Goodwood, found them a great burden.

Expense was nothing to him ; he always gave John Kent, junior, a blank cheque for making purchases. Even in his most phenomenal year, 1845, when he won £31,502 in stakes, it is doubtful whether he recouped his costs. But his prime interest was in betting. When Gaper ran for the Derby in 1843, Lord George stood to win over £100,000. But he knew his horse was beaten before the race began ; and indeed, it was a miracle that the sky blue jacket and white cap looked a winner in that Derby almost up to the judge's stand, although coming in only fourth. For his knees gave Gaper the appearance of a

horse which had stood at a cab stand all his life, and the Duke of Richmond advised Lord George to stand him in straw to be painted. It was only the immoderate and extravagant high training which had made him for a time a serious contender.

Gaper was of his own breeding. Lord George was not content merely to own horses ; he wished to know them as thoroughly—and as exclusively—as only the maintenance of his own stud would permit. For Bay Middleton, Gaper's sire, in whom he had unlimited faith, he gave the then unprecedented sum of four thousand pounds. And by 1844, when he had thirty-eight horses in competition, he had a stud of about seventy brood mares and two or three stallions.

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It is perhaps difficult to realize the fascination which could lead Lord George to such extravagant lengths as he exhibited throughout his racing career. No one who has not experienced the overpowering wave of excitement which sweeps over spectators as the horses, with pounding hoofs, heaving sides, and frantic jockeys approach the judge's stand, can ever hope fully to understand it. Charles Greville wrote in his *Memoirs* that he himself felt "so ashamed of the occupation, and a sort of consciousness of degradation and of deterioration from it, that my mind abhors the

idea of writing about it . . .”, and he was convinced that he had as much pain as pleasure from it ; but nevertheless he could not give it up. All this attraction was multiplied in Lord George to an infinite degree. To win his races and his bets was with him the prime consideration.

Is it startling, then, to learn that Lord George resorted on occasion in the early years of his career to some of those very tricks, dodges, and deceptions which later he condemned so heartily in others ? Any stratagems and manœuvres which could affect the odds of the betting, he regarded as perfectly legitimate for himself so long as they were not outright frauds. If they were perpetrated by others, as, for example, Squire Osbaldeston, his temper sometimes got the better of him. William Day, son of John Day, describes a ruse that was employed in 1835. Greville’s (that is, Lord George’s) Preserve was a great favourite for the Oaks, but this made the odds very unsatisfactory. Her nostrils were therefore painted with a concoction of flour, starch, and colouring matter to resemble mucus, and word got out that she had influenza. Greville and Lord George could hardly have been ignorant of this ; and no doubt they regretted it particularly after the race, which was won by the Queen of Trumps.

Still more revealing, perhaps, was Lord George’s procedure in connection with his Crucifix in 1839. The mare accidentally struck

her leg just before the Criterion Stakes at Newmarket. After the race a veterinary, who knew nothing of the cause, found the leg badly swollen and certified in writing that the horse would be laid up for some time. Discovering later, however, from John Day, junior, who knew the circumstances, that the injury was not serious, Lord George took great care to show the veterinary surgeon's written opinion about freely and planted confederates to take the odds of those who tried to save themselves from the apparent disaster awaiting those who had backed Crucifix. "He spared nobody," declares Greville.

"One letter to John Day which I saw was to this effect. He told him that *George Byng* and *Mr. Greville* were going down to Mr. B. Walls and would probably go over to Danebury to see the horses, that he would naturally show them, and he must take care to make Crucifix look as bad and as 'bedevilled' as he could, that at any rate *I* should go over and that if I did, he was to take care to show me Barrow's letter. In a subsequent letter he said that he need not show me Barrow's letter as he had already shown it me himself."

In this case the fraud,—for, after all, what else can it be called?—served very well and Lord George won considerable sums. But it was perhaps typical of the Turf Napoleon's too intensive policies that Crucifix, though only a two-year-old, broke down completely and permanently before the Season ended.



Yet Lord George no doubt looked upon all his ruses and manœuvres as thoroughly legitimate under the circumstances. By the racing code of the thirties they were nothing, not even peccadilloes. He was only defending himself as best he could in a sphere where trickery was regarded by the losers, to be sure, as black-guardism, but by the winners as a perfectly warranted exercise of the wits in taking advantage of the stupid and unwary. Still it was possible, or so some thought, to distinguish kinds and degrees of trickery. It was one thing to manipulate the betting market in order to secure favourable odds but it was quite another matter to run an unfair race or to refuse to pay one's losses.

Thus Lord George could become famous as a reformer of the turf. During the period after Crucifix's debacle the rôle grew upon him. So well did it suit him and his character that at the height of his racing career in 1845 he was, to use Disraeli's picturesque phrase, lord paramount of the Turf, the heaviest and keenest better, and the dictator of horse-racing ethics. It was for his reforms that he was later remembered. Indeed before he died he was apotheosized by the *Sporting Magazine* as "the uncompromising enemy to every species of shuffling and rascality".

This purification took three forms: the introduction of regulations which would ensure

an honest and open competition of all the horses brought to the starting post ; the elimination from the betting fraternity of persons who could not or would not pay when they lost ; and the rigid exclusion of horses masquerading under false names and pedigrees. No one could doubt the necessity for changes in the arrangements which prevailed on the courses. The unmarshalled mob was accustomed to appear in the greatest confusion, without any real accommodation provided for its convenience, to see the races run long after the time for which they were advertised, to witness a series of disgraceful manœuvres among the jockeys for securing advantage, and to hear a decision on the winner pronounced by a judge who was either incapable or undesirous of arriving at an accurate verdict. With the co-operation of the Duke of Richmond who, as proprietor, could make reform effective, Lord George Bentinck introduced order and system into this chaos, and made Goodwood the model of all that was most desirable in English racecourses. An enclosure was constructed around the stand and admission charged. The old ruse of tiring out a rival's restive horse by delays was brought to an end by requiring all officials and jockeys to appear punctually. The sporting world, indeed, was amazed to witness races being run within three-quarters of an hour of the appointed time. To stimulate interest the racers, carrying their numbered riders in

brilliant array, were paraded before the stands and put through their paces. The disgraceful manœuvres at the starting post by which over-clever riders deliberately neglected to get away with the others and thus necessitated beginning the race over again were abolished.

These technical reforms were a comparatively simple matter. They cut down some of the opportunities for sharp practice, but they left ample room for rascality. In striking at defaulters Lord George came closer home to the deviltry of the Turf, with the consequence that he stirred up a mess of corruption and scandal the stench of which the racing world could not get out of its nostrils for years. Of all the manifold kinds of trickery connected with the racecourse, he considered a failure to pay lost bets the most dastardly, the most really unfair. It was the essence of fraud. Lord George himself had once been a momentary defaulter and had to be rescued by his mother, but this never seemed to occur to him when a loser levanted or came to ask for mercy.

His hatred of defaulters first received prominent notice in 1841 in connection with the Gurney affair. A certain Gurney, discovering after the Derby that he could not pay his losses until he had received his winnings, appointed a firm of attorneys to collect for him. Lord George was furious and took the lead in a movement at Tattersall's to refuse all payments to Gurney,

maintaining, it is reported, that "he could not recognize the doctrine that individuals who had lost sums to this person should pay those sums into the hands of irresponsible persons, without any guarantee that the winners would ever receive the amount of their claims." As several members of the Jockey Club had already agreed to Gurney's arrangements, this was a bold stand. It was only with difficulty that Lord George could be induced to take a more moderate attitude and agree to a compromise. Even then he fell foul of the Derby stewards and the Club over the details. A correspondence took place in which the stewards expressed themselves as "at a loss to know in what capacity his lordship feels it his duty to address them," and when it was established that Lord George had made a mistake in some of the facts the affair ended with an apology to the Jockey Club in April 1842.

But on the principle of reform, of which he was now the recognized champion, he did not give way. On the contrary he set himself through the example of Goodwood and the influence of the Jockey Club to purge all the racecourses in the country. At Goodwood in 1843 a notorious delinquent was warned off all the Duke of Richmond's property and it was announced that no defaulter would be allowed to enter the grandstand or the racing enclosure or to run horses in any races. Similar measures were taken at about the same time to clear out

the "scum and filth" from the betting rings at Newmarket and elsewhere.

In consequence Lord George, because he did not believe that he who gambles must expect to be cheated, became the terror of any unfortunate person who could not immediately settle his accounts. One debtor, who pleaded for time, received the most brusque reply. "Sir," Lord George is reported to have said, "no man has a right to bet, if he cannot pay, should he lose. The sum I want of you is four thousand pounds, and until that sum is paid you are on the list of defaulters in the ring, and on the course."

Grantley Berkeley has related another incident indicative of the extreme effrontery to which Lord George was driven by his zeal for this badly-needed reform. Sir St. Vincent Cotton, just recovered from a severe illness, was eating one day at Crockford's. When he asked for his bill Lord George Bentinck, who was also there, commanded the waiter in loud and supercilious tones to bring it instead to him. Having glanced at it he announced in the same taunting voice, "Before Sir St. Vincent Cotton ordered so expensive a dinner, he ought to have paid his debts."

It was the same righteous and dogged determination to make gambling safe that led him in 1844 to prosecute a certain Connop for a racing debt of £150, solely in order to expose him. Already before this case was decided the effects of the crusade were being felt, the air of the

betting ring had been cleared, and recklessness was checked. "The 'legimates,' " wrote the *Sporting Magazine*,

"have to thank Lord George Bentinck for this pleasing reform on the Turf, for if that Nobleman had not persevered to the utmost, even his powerful influence would have been *blighted*, and the host of 'rotten sheep' left to infect the sound constitution of the remaining flock."

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But the policy raised a host of enemies, who now attempted to secure their revenge. An Act passed during the reign of Queen Anne (9 Anne c. 14, section 2), apparently intended to curb reckless gambling at cards, dice, and other games common in gambling dens, had provided that informers might sue winners of bets for the amount won and treble damages. Past interpretations by the courts had applied the measure to horse racing. On this basis a certain attorney by the name of James Russell, acting for un-named persons in the background, brought thirty-four *qui tam* actions, as the informations were called, against a number of the principal figures of the racing world in the latter half of 1843. The Earl of Eglintoun, Charles Greville, Colonel Jonathan Peel, Henry Hill, and John Gully, the last two well-known betting agents of Lord George, all were to be victims. Six writs were sworn out against Lord George Bentinck himself.

The Turf world was in an uproar. On a mere technicality its mentors were to be mulcted of vast sums for making the wagers which were the breath of life to horse-racing. Lord George had no illusions on the subject but realized that the "vagabonds" had the law on their side. "On ours," he wrote to Sir William Gregory, another of the victims, "we have the difficulty of proof, and the indisposition of juries to give them a verdict."

In this judgment he omitted to consider the lengths to which indignation and class feeling would lead the country gentlemen to go in defence of their order. The Duke of Richmond introduced a Betting and Gambling Bill into the House of Lords which would have made all bets enforceable in the courts, and although this was dropped as too extreme, a measure was passed suspending until the end of the session the actions which had been brought. Another later extended the suspension until the end of the coming session. Committees were appointed by both Houses to investigate the subject, and finally the objectionable statutory clauses were repealed altogether, the *qui tam* actions being consigned with them to oblivion. It had been a very uncomfortable time for the Turf gentry in Parliament, who found the greatest difficulty in discovering a suitable excuse for the procedure which they insisted upon adopting. The respectability of the defendants, though openly alluded to as a

sufficient reason, evoked the counter cry of class legislation, while a reference to ignorance of the law seemed to excuse altogether too much. Like so many incidents of the Turf it was a thoroughly rotten affair from start to finish, the despicable informers, forced to recognize a sadly-needed set of regulations set up by self-appointed reformers, turning upon their persecutors to teach them by obsolete statutes that they were law-breakers too, and Parliament saving the smug aristocrats from the consequences.

It would have been unlike Lord George Bentinck to accept this easy way out of the situation. His fury and hatred, his self-righteous determination to clean the Augean stable of horse-racing, and his desire for revenge combined to induce him to waive Parliamentary rescue. He seems to have felt confident that no conviction could be secured against him, and no doubt it occurred to him that the more he could run up the costs of an unsuccessful suit the more his enemies' tricks would recoil upon them. Only one of the suits, an action for £12,000 because of a bet of £3,000 won by Lord George Bentinck from a certain Gully (who was supposed to have been the agent of John Day) was brought into court. Gully testified that he had taken the bet for himself. Henry Hill, another agent, declared he had burnt his betting books. The jury acquitted Lord George, not, it seems certain, because they believed him guiltless but because he



had outmanœuvred his opponents and because *qui tam* actions were unpopular. He was too dangerous to be attacked again in this quarter.

Indeed he could now take the offensive and drive home with the most vindictive bitterness charges of sharp dealing against the John Days and two gentlemen named Crommelin and Ives. It was only when the Days put Charles Greville in possession of their past correspondence with Lord George that they were able to check the ardour of their persecutor. The letters, Greville has reported, "were damning in their import, for they disclosed a systematic course of treachery, falsehood, and fraud which would have been far more than sufficient to destroy any reputation . . . ." A warning of possible retaliation put a stop to the connection of "the great Purist" with the case. It is all very revolting to the views of the present day. There were so many pots and kettles involved that it must be admitted none of the evidence is altogether above suspicion.

For in spite of all his efforts to purge sport of its corruption, the year 1844 seemed the very climax of fraud, trickery, and deception. The Derby of that year seems in retrospect almost ludicrous in its rascality. A scandal arose in connection with Crockford's Ratan, which was declared to be as "safe as if he were boiled". Faugh-a-ballah, heavily backed, was suddenly withdrawn by his owner without any explanation. Leander, injured in the race, and afterwards

hastily buried with the lower jaw removed, was subsequently proven to have been not a three-year-old, as the Derby rules require, but a four-year-old. And Running Rein, the horse which first passed the judge's stand, was also a four-year-old.

To expose this last villainy Lord George devoted all his energy, perseverance, and painstaking attention. Already in the autumn of 1843 suspicions had been aroused that Running Rein was masquerading with a false pedigree, and it was public knowledge that Lord George Bentinck professed himself ready to establish the fact. When the Jockey Club investigated in the following spring, however, the case failed for want of proof. After the Derby the matter became a *cause célèbre* ; Colonel Peel, owner of Orlando, the second horse, took the matter to the courts, where evidence could be heard on oath ; and Lord George redoubled his efforts. In the picturesque words of *Bell's Life* the race was " to be run over again in a court of law, the respective nags to be ridden by full wigged jocks ".

No doubt Lord George had not been entirely without responsibility for the presence at the Derby of a certain farmer named Worley who had had Running Rein in his charge for several months, knowing him as Maccabaeus, which was his real name. Lord George likewise ferreted out the early history of Maccabaeus and made a journey to Ireland where he secured conclusive

evidence. By the time the case of *Wood v. Peel* was heard on July 1st, 1844, it was notorious that Lord George Bentinck rather than Orlando's owner, was the real mover in the matter. Cockburn, Wood's counsel, did not hesitate to say as much. In the court room the crusader took a seat directly behind Peel's counsel and prompted him throughout all the proceedings. Afterwards, according to Greville, the attorney, "amazed at the ability and dexterity which he displayed", said that "there was no sum he would not give to secure the professional assistance of such a coadjutor." Against this formidable antagonist the syndicate of rogues who owned Running Rein had no chance of success. Their final ruse of spiriting away the horse before judge, jury or veterinary surgeons could inspect him knocked the bottom completely out of their case; and the court by way of final judgment could only emit the smug dictum that "if gentlemen will condescend to race with blackguards, they must expect to be cheated".

Lord George Bentinck was now the hero, as he had before been the domineering dictator, of the Turf. A testimonial subscription was collected which at his suggestion became The Bentinck Benevolent and Provident Fund for the relief of trainers and jockeys and their families. To Greville, who had known his cousin in somewhat different circumstances, he seemed the greatest fraud of all. "What a humbug it all

is," he exclaimed, "and if everybody knew all that I know of his tricks and artifices what a rogue he would be thought!" This apparent inconsistency Greville was inclined to explain by Lord George's peculiar code of morality, which justified deceit and falsehood in horse-racing so long as it was restricted to certain circumstances. More charitable and more accurate would it be to describe the reforming genius as growing upon him. At first his interest centred simply in securing fair tactics on the course; then the problem of defaulters became an acute one; and finally came the Running Rein scandal. Under the influence of his progressive activities in these matters he came to believe in his own righteousness. There is no saint like a recent convert, no zealot like an apostate.

But, whatever Lord George Bentinck's character as a reformer, he did a great service to the Turf. It was not that he was a model of purity. The sternest moralist, the most inspiring leader, the ablest statesman—and he was none of these—could never make into a tea party a sport so uncertain as that of gambling on the vagaries of horseflesh. Indeed a growing luxury and looseness seemed to make this reverse side of the Victorian era rather worse than better. But it passes the powers of imagination to picture what it would have been if Lord George Bentinck had not purged the betting ring to make it safe for "gentlemen", remodelled the technique of

rages to render them as nearly as humanly possible a genuine contest of the horses participating, and taught a forceful lesson to masqueraders.

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That such a man should suddenly become a force in politics seems surprising enough at first thought. But his meteoric rise to leadership of the protectionists followed as a natural sequel to his unmerciful persecution of the scallawags of the Turf. Sir Robert Peel was in his eyes not very different from a scoundrel who did not pay his bets. He had undertaken as Prime Minister to lead the Conservative party, the party of the country gentlemen, and when he found that the protection which the duties on grain had given to the landed classes could no longer be maintained he had deserted his principles. The manufacturing classes had risen in their might, the Anti-Corn Law League had swept the country with an agitation for free trade, and a famine in Ireland had supplied a tragic but conclusive argument. Peel had decided that the Corn Laws must go, and he proposed to repeal them. What was this but a default on his original contract?

Lord George therefore rushed forward with a shrill bellow that fairly rang through the halls of the House of Commons. Without training, without practice, without any real capacity for

leadership he commanded attention by the white heat of his indignation, by his terrible earnestness, by the dogged industry of his attack. There was no charge which he was not willing to bring against Peel. From the musty annals of private gossip he dragged forth an outrageous accusation that Peel had "chased and hunted an illustrious relative" of his, George Canning, to death. The attack was a total failure, and the more so as Peel was able dextrously to make it appear an attempt to chase and hunt *him* to *his* political death. Indeed, this was only too truly the case. During the conferences of the Protectionists concerning the policy to be followed on the Coercion Bill, which ultimately brought Peel's defeat, Lord George expressed his views succinctly in favour of opposing the measure by saying, "It may be perilous, but if we lose this chance the traitor will escape." Appeals to his self interest made no impression upon him. To one of the free traders he frankly said, ". . . I keep horses in three counties, and they tell me that I shall save fifteen hundred a year by Free Trade. I don't care for that. *What I cannot bear is being sold.*"

Still he did not confine himself merely to personal attacks. As in the Running Rein case he hammered out a mass of evidence which proved very uncomfortable for his adversaries. With all his dogged fury he plunged into the Blue Books, conferred with manufacturers and representatives of other interests, and built up as

convincing a case as had ever been made out on a much debated subject. His speech of February 27th, opening his campaign as leader of the Protectionists, was generally acknowledged to have been a considerable achievement and to have revealed a capacity for expression and debate which would have made him a statesman of consequence if he had devoted his life to politics, and all this despite the greatest of handicaps.

For he did have some of the most serious faults in political life. He was so totally lacking in judgment and so obstinate in refusing to listen to advice that only his peculiar intensity of purpose, which went for sincerity with most people, could make up for it. His personal attack on Peel, and later his ludicrous charges against Lord Lyndhurst for a trifling political job, were blunders. His speech of February 27th, 1846, was made at the worst possible time, late at night when the House was weary, and it lasted for three hours. To his faults of judgment was added an unusually unattractive manner of speaking. His high-pitched voice, his old-fashioned habits of excessive gesture, an unpleasant drawl, inveterate use of the device of repetition, constant hesitation, and the intemperate resort to statistics would have rendered unbearable a speaker who did not command attention by an undeniable mastery of the subject which he had achieved overnight by sheer industry. Under the tactful guidance of

his friend Benjamin Disraeli, he overcame some of these faults. But he could never make himself a good speaker nor free himself from *Punch's* unhesitating raillery.

“ Lord George is a-coming, huzza ! huzza !

Lord George is a-coming, huzza ! huzza !

He's prosing and summing, and hawing and humming,—

Yes, that's him a-coming, huzza ! huzza ! ”

Disraeli himself, who certainly had the best opportunity to judge, expressed himself confidently some years later to the effect that excessive prolixity, if nothing else, would have prevented Lord George from ever becoming a successful Cabinet Minister.

For verbosity and industry could never give understanding. The details of racing life, the calculation of chances, had not been beyond his powers, but the details of statesmanship were too much for him. They overwhelmed him, as the frail meshes of a net overwhelm a powerful animal. His political views therefore were but those of the Conservative Protectionists, with some admixture of his old Whiggism. The constitutional preponderance, as Disraeli has called it, of the landed classes served as his fundamental tenet. “ I believe,” declared Lord George in April 1846, “ that the first ingredient in the happiness of a people is, that the gentry should reside on their native soil, and spend their rents among those from whom they receive them.” Accordingly this precious preponderance should



be protected. And as a corollary Lord George loved to point out his fascinating little calculation showing the immense preferability of home over foreign trade because a sovereign spent at home would be turned over a score of times in a year, while that spent abroad might take a year or more in returning. Such specious fripperies passed with him for profound truths.

In short Lord George Bentinck was not a statesman nor even a successful party leader. After Peel's defeat he continued as the leader of the Protectionists but he had a very uncomfortable time of it. The Tories soon discovered his incapacity. They became restive. For it was not customary to cashier party chiefs, who were regarded as having a kind of vested interest in their positions. Lord George was restive too, for he had never wished the place, only accepting it because no one else seemed prepared to demand the revenge which he deemed necessary, and only then on the distinct understanding that he was to give up when a more competent leader should appear. Though he was not a modest man he knew his incompetence ; there was no insincerity in him when he thanked the House for its indulgence in listening to his speech in which he moved the appropriation of money for Irish railroads. Yet he continued to hurl his accusations of political wickedness about him with all his initial abandon. Lord Stanley, leader in the House of Lords, made a speech at a Carlton Club

dinner in which he attempted to calm this rancour and urged more restraint of language. But this gesture only produced a violent quarrel. All Disraeli's skill was required to calm the storm.

To cap it all there came the Jewish question in the fall of 1847. Lionel Rothschild, elected to the Commons, refused to take the oath "on the true faith of a Christian"; and both Disraeli and Lord George Bentinck voted to remove the requirement. This "atheism" the Tories, despite the fact that no secret had been made of Lord George's Whiggish views on the subject, could not stomach. Lord George, racked with influenza, at odds with Stanley, furious at attempts to rehabilitate that "organized hypocrisy" the Conservative party, received a request for resignation of his leadership. The wheel of fortune had indeed come full turn. The denouncer of traitors in 1846 was now denounced in turn as a traitor before two years had passed, and, let it be said, with as little reason. "Appointed", wrote Lord George bitterly on December 26th, 1847, "on account of my uncompromising spirit, I am dismissed for the same reason; that which was my principal virtue in 1846 is my damning vice in 1847." And it is curious to notice that Lord George could not be forgiven a Jewish vote because he was not a Jew, while Disraeli could be because he *was* a Jew.

Despite it all Lord George did not really cease to be the leader. As he had identified himself so ardently with the Protectionist Cause,

and as there was no available substitute, he remained in command by default. Not that there was no more able man in his party, for at his elbow throughout the struggle stood Benjamin Disraeli, the Elisha ever ready to receive the mantle of leadership if it did not fall too soon from Lord George's shoulders. But the Jew, however ambition might secretly devour him, was obliged to act in the most circumspect, discreet, and unselfish fashion before he could convince the Tories of his acceptability in the absence of a gentleman statesman.

Political passion had done a great deal for Disraeli. In 1834, when he was suggested as a suitable Stanleyite successor at King's Lynn to Lord William Pitt Lennox, Lord George would not hear of him. Twelve years later the former dandy, now a practised parliamentary hand, clever in strategy, stinging in repartee, daring in debate, brilliant in oratory, suddenly became the boon political companion of the tedious and verbose Lord George Bentinck, whose chief virtue he himself admitted to be his uncompromising spirit. What an extraordinary pair of political adventurers! What a contrast! Disraeli compared Peel to the Turkish Lord High Admiral who steered into the enemy's port and surrendered the fleet, justifying his action on the grounds that he wished to bring to an end the Sultan's war with Mehemet Ali. The most Lord George could do was to describe Peel



## THE PROTECTIONIST DON QUIXOTE.



we had prepared the above magnificent illustration in full expectation that the Protectionist *Don Quixote* would have been attended by faithful *Sancho Panza* at the late demonstration at Chelmsford. As he was absent, whether from jealousy or not we are unable to tell, he would not come to swell the troop of his leader. Surely *AELI* has not become dizzy with ambition!

LORENTINE *Don* nevertheless, rode his steed Protection with his

made in reference to LORD STANLEY by one of his admirers and followers, wanted the change of a word to make it quite as appropriate LORD GEORGE BENTINCK. Of LORD STANLEY, it may be all very well to say

"*Teutro dnce et auspice Teutro. Nil desperandum.*"

but of the Protectionist *Don Quixote*, whose evolutions on the back of a naked hobby are without parallel, except in the annals of Astley's,

prosaically as a traitor supported by janissaries and renegades. Yet he, incomparably the inferior, occupied the post of leader, while Disraeli, distrusted for his brilliance and insincerity, and for his not being a country gentleman, was only a kind of lieutenant.

No greater tribute could be paid to Disraeli's ability as a manager of men than his skilful guidance of his high-bred and spirited friend. With the incomparable tact of which he was such a master he advised and led a man whose suspicious nature, violent temper, and inexorable obstinacy were notorious. In his biography of *Lord George Bentinck*, although highly partisan, Disraeli did not exaggerate when he advertised himself in the thin disguise of "a friend" appearing in every chapter with words of caution, incitement, or wisdom. *Punch* depicted Lord George as Don Quixote mounted on the nag Protection, while Disraeli as Sancho Panza bestrode a donkey that trotted along behind. This hardly does justice to the importance of Disraeli in the partnership. He gained Lord George's complete confidence. The country gentleman would listen to Disraeli's attempts to improve his manner of speaking, though he could not bear to have his political opinions disputed. He cherished no illusions about which was the more capable man of the two and before long he was giving expression to his indignation at the way in which Disraeli was treated by the

Protectionists. If they did not mend their ways, he wrote, they would "leave a blot upon the fair name of the country gentlemen of England". Whether or not he would have agreed with the pretty speech which Lady Londonderry sent to Disraeli, "*Le talent règne en Angleterre et ne gouverne pas*," he prophesied in March 1848, that before two sessions were over Disraeli would be chosen leader of the party. The one desideratum which Disraeli did not have was the status of country gentleman. This Lord George set about securing, and shortly after his death Disraeli became the proprietor of Hughenden Manor and recognized leader of the Tories.

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Even if Lord George Bentinck had not died in 1848 it would have been better so. For, after all, Lord George was essentially a man of the Turf, in politics by the default of the landed classes but never fitted for them nor comfortable out of his element. Throughout his three years of active politics he continually showed the characteristics of the racing enthusiast. His cardinal principle was that he "would not swerve from the course". He was constantly exposed to taunts and caricatures about his jockeyism. Sir James Graham taunted him as "a great authority on the doctrine of chances" and Lord John Russell rebuked him soundly for his treating public men with the same suspicion and violence

that had proven so successful against scoundrels of the Turf. And *Punch* caught up with glee his inadvertent quotation from Burke to the effect that Members of the House of Commons should be men of "stable mind".

But far from abandoning the Turf or blushing for it, Lord George continued to identify himself with it. He declared boldly his pride in being a steward of the Jockey Club, and maintained that there were as distinguished and honourable men on the Turf as any in public life. Nor did he hesitate to move the adjournment of the House of Commons over Derby day in 1847 in the face of evangelical protest. In the fall of 1846 he suddenly astounded the racing world by selling all his horses, the future Derby winner Surplice and 207 other thoroughbreds, for the trifling sum of £10,000. This was no doubt a great sacrifice to his keen if distorted sense of public duty, for he could have regained the immense pleasure which the Turf afforded him and prevented the great losses which inattention would be sure to entail, only by renouncing his absorption in Parliamentary affairs. But it did not mean a complete abandonment of interest in racing.

Already in 1848 his thoughts were turning seriously in that direction once more. Surplice, which he had sold as a foal, startled him by winning the Derby. In the presence of Disraeli he unbent for a moment his haughty demeanour to give vent to that "superb groan" which his



friend has so eloquently recounted. Just too late the unattainable prize had been won by a horse of his breeding. In despair he characteristically "buried himself in a folio of statistics". But the resignation of the leadership had already turned his thoughts to something besides statistics. He was at Newmarket to see the Two Thousand Guineas and Mrs. Anson urged him to "come back to us, and leave those dreadful politics alone". He was at Doncaster on September 12th, the first day of the races. The next day he saw Surplice win the St. Leger. That, perhaps, decided him. He wrote to John Kent, junior, appointing a meeting with him and when Kent appeared Lord George, acquainting him with his intention of taking up active racing once more, asked him to collect a string of eight or ten horses.

This was not to be. On September 21st he set out to walk through the fields from Welbeck to Thoresby Park, the near-by residence of Lord Manvers. Late that night searchers found his cold and lifeless body face down on the path which he had been following. One little failure of the heart muscles had snuffed out his existence and given the new electric telegraph from Nottingham a startling message to carry to London. Not the least of the many interested was Benjamin Disraeli, whose time had now indeed come.

Lord George was thus cut off sharply in the prime of life. Having lived most of his forty-six years in comparative political obscurity he had blazed forth with an amazing fire for a scant three years, and gone out as unexpectedly, almost without a why or whither. But those years before, when his light shone in another direction, furnish the clue to the mystery. Disraeli may have thought that the less said about them the better ; but, then, they did not altogether fit his theories. He wrote with his tongue in his cheek. To Lord Henry Bentinck, Lord George's younger brother, he stated his belief that " When a complete review is thus taken [in the biography he proposed to write] of his public character and achievements, I think the country will understand how much might have been expected from the man whom they have lost." But to Greville he confided his frank opinion that Lord George would have failed as a Cabinet Minister as completely as he failed in the role of leader of an opposition.

For Lord George was a kind of Puritan in his way. Within the rather peculiar standards he had set, he was the most rigid moralist, and he could not bear that anyone should oppose him. This attitude he applied to his body, and when he found that food was largely responsible for an abnormal amount of indolence and drowsiness he became almost an ascetic in such matters. Already in the thirties he was known for his

abstemiousness when there was work to do. From an early breakfast to a late dinner he touched nothing at all, and during the height of his Parliamentary career the dinner often came after midnight. Yet he loved food. Ude, the cook at Crockford's, took great pride in a "*pouding à la Bentinck*", a stoneless cherry pudding which he had invented for him.

And he never spared himself. How strangely the natural indolence and the intense industry go together in the same man! During the Parliamentary period the fierceness of his feelings and the pressure of his sense of duty led him to remain on the alert in the House of Commons until midnight, to work at home until four in the morning, and rise again at eight. The house-keeper at his London home, Harcourt House, declared that he was killing himself. These proceedings afforded Disraeli his excuse for saying that Lord George had given his life for his country. It is true that he was a martyr to his passion, but the violence of exertion and thought which came from this had characterized his life from the beginning. It might as easily be said that he undermined his health so severely on the Turf that he had little left to give for his country.

After all, he may be best described as a frustrated man. He was a younger son. The army offered him nothing. He made a failure, at least for a time, in Parliament. He turned to horse-racing, a sport full of the bitterest

disappointments, and never won the Derby. He fell in love once, and desperately, with the Duchess of Richmond, who was totally unattainable. Perhaps these disappointments found their compensation in the savageness which characterized him in so much of his life, the implacable hatred which he bore to enemies, the furious suspicions which he entertained, the insuperable obstinacy with which he clung to his opinions.

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Charles Greville, as an intimate friend and enemy of his cousin, whom he encountered in all his activities, filled

his memoirs (*The Greville Memoirs. A Journal of the Reigns of King George IV, King William IV, and Queen Victoria*, ed. by Henry Reeve, new ed., 8 vols., London, 1902-5) with references to him. The *Greville Diary* (Philip Whitwell Wilson, ed., 2 vols., New York, 1927) gives the passages formerly suppressed.

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## CHAPTER III

### GRANTLEY BERKELEY

IF a moralist were seeking an illustration of the Biblical dictum that the sins of the father are visited on the sons he could hardly find a better subject than Grantley Berkeley. His father, the fifth Earl of Berkeley, by the singular ineptitude of his marital adventures, poisoned the lives and relations of his numerous children to such a degree that the virus remained, and, indeed, became more venomous, as long as they lived. The fatal chain of circumstances all arose out of the earl falling in love with a tradesman's daughter. Because of her station in life he did not at first make her his wife, but contented himself with giving her the more compromising—though to a man of his position less irksome—rôle of mistress. Having had by this woman four sons, he married her in 1796, the subsequent children being therefore legitimate. But the law declared that the children born of the same parents before the marriage could have no part in the inheritance of the title.

Naturally enough the parents failed to see the justice of the awkward situation into which their folly had led them, and they decided that the eldest son, William, should succeed to the earldom,

as well as to the bulk of the property. The documents were therefore tampered with and it was announced that there had been a secret marriage in 1785 ; hence all the children were born in wedlock. Accordingly when the fifth earl died in 1810 he left a will which awarded to his eldest son William something over £30,000 in personal property, Berkeley Castle, and the extensive Gloucestershire estates, while to Maurice, the second son, went his Sussex estates, and to each of the other five sons an income of £700 a year, with a lump sum of £5,000 on their reaching the age of twenty-one.

Not content with disposing thus of the material part of his wealth, the Earl had also taken every precaution to insure that the title likewise should go to William. The will therefore referred to him only as Lord Dursley, the courtesy title of the heir to the earldom, and solemnly declared his legitimacy. A penal clause was inserted to deprive of their shares any of the sons who should dispute Lord Dursley's title. But, however the family might agree, the House of Lords refused to recognize William as Earl. The Berkeley peerage case, tried in the House of Lords in 1811, proved the whole story of the secret marriage a tissue of intrigue, deceit, falsification, and barefaced lies. Still, it was one thing to declare William not the legitimate earl, and another to induce Moreton Berkeley, the first legitimate son, to take his seat. Lady Berkeley, whose somewhat

questionable fair name was involved, was completely unscrupulous ; and Moreton, still a minor, was kept at home, where he accepted without question the story told him by his mother and consequently made no attempt to claim the earldom. Colonel William, as the eldest son was now called, therefore remained in full and undisputed possession of everything but title and honour.

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Grantley Berkeley, born in 1800, was the sixth son, and, as the second after the marriage of 1796, was the heir presumptive to Moreton by the decision of the House of Lords. But since his mother and Colonel William never intended Moreton or Grantley to occupy any stations of consequence in life, they were brought up in semi-obscurity at Cranford House, near London, the residence of Lady Berkeley after 1811. Her tastes did not run to education and she hardly encouraged them to attend seriously to their tutor, who came over from a nearby school three times a week. The dancing master, "an absurd, fat old fellow", received the disrespect due to such a teacher of gracefulness. There was thus hardly anything of cultural development for the young Grantley Berkeley. Recollections of earlier years at Berkeley House in Spring Gardens, London, where he had been born, and visits to his godfather, the Prince



Regent, in Brighton, left little impression upon him.

The boys, then, took their inferior position for granted, accepted the doctrine taught them that the decision of the House of Lords was unsound, and contented themselves with the amusements that offered. Henry Berkeley, an older brother, delighted in matching Grantley at boxing with any boy who could be found, and even with one of the footmen, and there was thus plenty of practice in what Grantley always affectionately regarded as the manly sport of boxing. Many years afterwards he congratulated himself on having escaped the brutalizing effects of such experience but it is difficult to discover any grounds for his satisfaction. The other great amusement and occupation of youth took the form of field sports and game preservation. With a gun and a ferocious dog, Grumbo, cross between a bulldog and a mastiff, Grantley was soon in the fields. He and Moreton got up an immense head of game, killed off the vermin assiduously, and made themselves the terror of all poachers. For they were their own gamekeepers and headed the watchers at night when poachers were expected in gangs. It was a red-letter day when Grumbo enabled Grantley to bring in his first poacher. Nor did the young tyrants hesitate to terrorize the neighbouring farmers who, despite the game law restrictions of the day, insisted on killing game. In time

there was a pony on which Grantley could follow Mr. Westbrook's harriers at Heston nearby. So he grew up a thorough sportsman, zealous for the life of the fields, quick to administer with his own fists what he thought was justice, violent in his hatred of a poacher. Afterwards he thought he had been ill treated in his youth. He had certainly been neglected, but hardly more so than was the fate of many other younger sons of his station in society.

Life, however, was not to be all beer and skittles for him. Something in the nature of a career he must have, although the same necessity did not seem to apply to Moreton, who remained with hounds and gun at Cranford, while Grantley went off to the military school at Sandhurst. Great men always seem to remember their school days with a certain horror. If this could have made the young man of fifteen great he would undoubtedly have acquired no little fame. Already a hearty snob, he found Sandhurst "a dirty college, for in those days the establishment was not really a school for gentlemen". Painful to discover, there were sons of non-commissioned officers, boys who could hope to become officers only by working their way. For reasons which his later life gave nothing whatever to justify, he was accused of effeminacy by his fellows and properly hazed. His mother had tried to have a pianoforte kept in his room. And the food . . . . Berkeley tells of his complaint

made to the Duke of Kent, who came on a tour of inspection. "Sir," I blurted out, "they don't give us good food : the meat is tough, the potatoes all eyes, the swipes (beer) double us up ; when we drink water, tadpoles in the pots come up to look at our nose . . . ."

Sandhurst, therefore, did not last long. Nor was it necessary that it should, for in those days it was not considered desirable that officers in the army should actually have a knowledge of warfare. Gentlemen became officers in pursuance of the fashion for gentlemen ; if they proved capable military leaders they did so from accident, genius, or experience, not from training. In 1816, then, after only a year at Sandhurst, Berkeley received from the Prince Regent, his godfather, a commission in the Coldstream Guards. But it was a dull time for army life and a few years wasted at ornamenting London, furnishing ceremonial pomp, and guarding the Palace and Tower sufficed for a spirited young man.

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In 1823, not long after he came of age, Grantley exchanged to a half-pay commission (which he retained until his death) and returned to his sport at Cranford. For a time he had taken some interest in racing, running in gentlemen riders' contests on Hounslow Heath, at Egham, and at Moulsey Hurst (Hurst Park), but as he was

growing to a height of two inches over six feet and a weight over twelve stone, he turned to the more congenial amusements of game preserving, shooting, fishing, and, above all, hunting. Although the deer chase, royal sport of the Middle Ages, had by this time almost died out in England, Moreton and Grantley still maintained at Cranford a hunt rivalling in spirit, if not in pomp, the royal establishment at Windsor. Grantley, throwing himself into the amusement with whole-hearted vigour, soon superseded Moreton in the management of the hounds, and relegated his brother to the position of whipper-in, as a full complement of hunt servants could not be afforded.

Hordes of hard-riding army officers from London and from the Hounslow barracks, horse-dealers bent on disposing of their wares by demonstration, and proud bucks and ambitious tradesmen—not least among them “Mr. Gunter, the renowned ice and pastry-cook in Berkeley Square”—came to Cranford village on the appointed days, packed the inns, and supplied the inimitable bustle of a hunting scene. It was a shoddy crowd, worthy of a Surtees, but in numbers Berkeley boasted that it more than rivalled the royal hunt, which commonly had a field of over a hundred. One wonders whether he himself was responsible for the unblushing, fulsome doggerel of “The Berkeley Hunt—A Song”, which was written for the Hunt Dinner of

1827, to be sung to the tune of "O believe me if all those endearing young charms".

"And of all the fine staghounds of which I could sing,  
The Berkeley's the pack for the sport ;  
They are not ' The King's ', but they're fit for a King,  
And they often run nearer to Court.  
See foremost, in yellow, bright, brighter than gold,  
Rides Gr[an]tl[e]y, the pride of his race !  
With M[ore]t[o]n and fifty fine fellows as bold,  
As e'er knew the joys of the chase.

"When the hounds are laid on, oh ! ye gods, what a crash,  
What bruising and pounding is here !  
See L——e, for a start, like a meteor dash,  
Or a Heaven-shot star from its sphere ;  
Lord Br—d—ll, John L—r, and Ch—ch—r's Earl,  
Go charging the Yedden amain.  
Bold John gets a ducking, the Peer gets a purl,  
But they're up, on, and at it again.

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"Now away on to Harrow they fly like the wind,  
Hark ! Gr—tl—y, he cheers them along ;  
How the out-of-condition are lagging behind ;  
To the road the M'Adamites throng.  
But the few, chosen few, of the genuine sort  
Are enjoying the best of it all :  
Tho' the fences are stiff, they but add to the sport,  
For who cares a d—n for a fall !"

But it was a pitiful, childish, and obsolescent sport. Not all Grantley's care to send his stags and hinds to the park at Gloucester Castle to run with the herd, out of season, could make the deer wild enough for the hunt. They habitually took refuge in barns and houses as the only places

they knew where they would be safe from the hounds. At the end of a run, through villages, gardens, meadows, it was a great point to capture the valuable animals unharmed by the pack in order to use them again and again in the future. The countryside, already rapidly becoming the suburban London that it is to-day, developed a bitter hostility at the sight of the reckless crowd of rural bullies and town wastrels destroying property of great value. In October 1826 the chase led straight through Osterley Park ; but it was a feat that could not be risked again, and the next time the deer ran that way the hounds had to be whipped off. Farmers indignantly warned the hunt not to trespass on their lands.

One such farmer attempted to take matters into his own hands. The stag, unaware of the warning not to trespass, entered his barn to escape the pursuers. Baker, the farmer, seeing half a hundred horsemen galloping incontinently over his most valuable meadow, cannily waited until some of the hounds followed the quarry into the barn and then proceeded to close the door. The hounds set to work without hesitation upon the valuable animal, while the frantic Grantley Berkeley engaged in an unseemly brawl with Baker outside. In the end Baker received a beating, but Berkeley lost not only his deer, which died of injuries, but his case in court, where a jury very properly assessed him a hundred pounds damages.

The abuse, in short, had passed all reason. The farmers knew that if they asked for damages Berkeley must pay or face prosecution. A subscription fund which was collected among the hunt only encouraged more demands. The deer being tame and accustomed to the safety of barns ran in the direction of the most buildings and therefore sought frequently the most cultivated country. Some of the sportsmen themselves saw the absurdity of the situation, and Berkeley relates, with his inimitable *naïveté*, how Lord Albanley reacted to a chase in which the deer ran through Hounslow and Twickenham and into the Thames. Lord Albanley was asked at White's Club what sport he had had. "Devilish good run," he replied; "but the asparagus beds went awfully heavy, and the glass all through was up to one's hocks; the only thing wanting was a landing net, for the deer got into the Thames, and Berkeley had not the means to get him ashore."

Even Grantley Berkeley's obstinate determination to show consideration to no one, had perforce to bow to the situation and seek other fields of adventure. He had lived a not uninteresting social life at Cranford, residing for a time at the inn because his mother would not countenance his late hours, then marrying in 1824 and taking a house.

Now, in 1829, all this was given up and Berkeley went to Bedfordshire as Master of the Oakley



Grantley F. Berkeley

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Hounds. The parallel with Facey Romford is unmistakable. Lord Tavistock, the Duke of Bedford's heir, who had formerly hunted the country, had sold his pack of hounds in consequence of a quarrel between the Duke and several other large proprietors on the one side and the Oakley Hunt Club on the other. But to a man like Berkeley the bad blood could only serve as an added inducement. Like Romford, he took up his residence first at an inn, where an attack of the measles supplied the earliest of his disappointments in his new position. Subsequently leasing Harrold Hall on the Ouse, together with the shooting and pike fishing, he set himself assiduously to the work of preserving the game and foxes. For a pack he brought sixteen couple of tried deerhounds from Cranford, begged from other packs a few steady but old foxhounds, drafted because of their age, and around this nucleus collected some forty couple of untrained and undisciplined puppies. Several young horses were purchased for cub hunting, with a view to future re-sale, while a liquorish but otherwise capable Tom Skinner and an ignorant fellow from the Salisbury kennels served as whips.

Trouble was not long in making its appearance. First the hounds, unused to their task, had to be settled to their work ; then the Oakley Club, deciding that it was undignified for a Master of Hounds to act as his own huntsman,

ordered Berkeley to secure another servant on pain of losing the subscriptions, which had been guaranteed for two years ; and finally Lord Tavistock himself urged Berkeley to give up the hunt because of his unpopularity. The new Master had far too much fight to submit tamely to such a fate. He defied the Oakley Club, threatened an action at law if the subscriptions were not paid, and declared his determination to challenge anyone who came to hunt the country in his place before the two years were up. As he had taken the precaution to secure the permission of the landed proprietors to hunt their covers, and strangely enough, whatever the gentlemen might think, had conciliated the farmers, he succeeded in his defiance, and the discontent died down in the second season with the improvement in the sport.

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The rise of other interests prevented the working out of this friction to the conclusion which might have been expected. Berkeley's relations with his eldest brother, who retained control of all the Berkeley wealth and power, were somewhat anomalous. Despite his legal position as heir presumptive, he understood very well that the penal clause in his father's will, which Colonel William would not hesitate to enforce, deprived him of all income from the Berkeley estate if he should raise a hand, and he

had no other resources on which to fall back. Still it is probable that Grantley at this period of his life troubled his mind very little over the possibility of Moreton's early death. Feeling, no doubt, as his brothers did, that honour forbade him—and material interests did not encourage him—to besmirch the family name by pressing Moreton Berkeley's claims, he remained on good terms with Colonel William.

William, the pretender, described by Charles Greville as "an arrant blackguard . . . notorious for general worthlessness", a rebel against social restraints, had no hesitation in using the servility of his brothers to assist in varnishing over the stain left by the decision of the House of Lords in 1811. As he purchased the use of another man's wife, with whom he lived openly at Berkeley Castle, as he defied the social usages of the day by acting on the stage, so he proposed to secure himself a title by the unscrupulous use of his power. It was a strange and inconsistent way of rehabilitating the reputation of the family, but the peculiar twist imparted to the Berkeley sons by the circumstances of their origin gave them all a somewhat distorted view of life.

In pursuance of his plan, then, William exercised his influence in favour of the Whig interest in the Reform campaign of 1831. Captain Maurice Berkeley was elected for the City of Gloucester and Grantley made his first two

political speeches in support of the Whig candidates in the Tewkesbury and the county elections. Colonel William Berkeley was then created Lord Segrave. But his ambition was mounting. *L'appétit vient en mangeant*. Grantley, although but thirty-two years of age, was old enough to act the part of henchman, and he was drafted for the Western Division of the county, Segrave agreeing after some bickering to pay the expenses. Thus, with Craven Berkeley, who was brought in for Cheltenham, there were three Berkeleys in the House of Commons, all sent there for the sole purpose of advancing the interests of the family, that is, Lord Segrave. The new Baron accordingly, on the first vacancy, became Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucestershire (to the great indignation of Charles Greville) and in 1841, after a fourth brother had been added in the election of 1837, he was created Earl Fitzhardinge.

In the House of Commons Grantley Berkeley was frankly a nullity, except in the Division Lobby. He almost never spoke, and when he did he said less than nothing. As an excuse—and what a craven one!—he later alleged that Segrave forbade his taking any line without first consulting him; hence Grantley was often prevented from participating in debates “because I was uncertain of the view that he would take”. The most illuminating incident, perhaps, of Grantley’s Parliamentary career was his proposal,

first brought forward on July 16th, 1835, for admitting women to the Strangers' Gallery in the House of Commons. Speaking with some elaborateness, appealing to the gallantry of the Members, and urging precedents of the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and the French and former Irish legislatures, Berkeley secured the appointment of a Select Committee. "We had very good fun on the Committee . . ." he wrote later. This, it must be confessed, describes the tone of the whole proceedings. The House of Commons, taking its cue from the mover, who, whatever his intentions, was prevented by his reputation from giving dignity to the subject, considered the whole matter as a joke, an opportunity for ill-bred innuendoes, or else, as in the case of Sir John Cam Hobhouse, shuddered to think of wives, mothers, or sisters listening to some of the less edifying debates.

There was even a scheme for introducing women in disguise into the Gallery and precipitating a debate by this means. The women, who had sat in the ventilator of the old House before the great fire of 1834, certainly had the most elementary justice on their side; but they were unfortunate in their champions, and the coarse mirth and indecency of some of the speeches induced many of the more sober spirits to assist in throwing out the proposal on a question of supply. A few years later, when some concessions were made to the women, a piece of plate was

presented to Berkeley in recognition of his efforts, but whether as a lark or not is uncertain.

From this event it is clear that Berkeley had now got among a set of the young bloods and dandies of the day. Disraeli mentions him in 1834 as among the gay and frivolous crowd of young men and "very pretty women" with whom he associated. Many years later Berkeley still recalled with pride and his inveterate conceit how he and Beau Brummel's successor, D'Orsay, set the fashion, and even, by folding their shirt cuffs tightly back over their coat sleeves, ventured on paths which others did not follow. But these associations never involved any very extensive excursions into dissipation. He never gambled, and he apparently shunned the all too prevalent excessive use of liquor, perhaps in both cases partly because he had not the means to indulge himself.

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Not the least of his heroes was Byron, the martyr of Missolonghi, who, he loved to think, had like himself suffered neglect in childhood, had the same boxing instructor, visited many of the scenes of Berkeley's youth, and retaliated savagely upon his reviewers. For Grantley Berkeley, the sportsman, the Master of Foxhounds, had turned to literature. His *Berkeley Castle*, an inconceivably dull romance of the time of the Wars of the Roses, written with the simplest and thinnest of plots, a total want of art, and an

incurable predilection for dangling participles and split infinitives, fell with the three heavy thuds of three weary volumes from the press in 1836.

It brought him fame, or rather notoriety, in a totally unexpected fashion. While at Harrold Hall, soon after the publication, Grantley received from Lord Segrave a copy of the August number of *Fraser's Magazine* together with a note directing attention to a review which it contained. The anonymous critic had launched the most devastatingly savage attack imaginable upon a highly vulnerable victim, tearing the book to shreds, writing down Berkeley's circle as a set of insolent coxcombs, assaulting the Berkeley family with a wealth of repulsive historical information and studied abuse, and covering the author himself with a deluge of eloquent, personal, and telling vilification. "We", he wrote, "do not know one of these fellows [in Berkeley's set] who, when he comes forward from the circle in which he is a 'gentlemanly man', does not prove himself to be a blockhead, and something worse. When he takes a pen in his hand, he not only displays a dire ignorance and stupidity, but, in nine cases out of ten, an utter meanness of thought and manners, and a crawling vulgarity of soul." Berkeley, writing about the glories of the Berkeley family, only afforded occasion for recalling with gusto the story of Berkeley's mother, and pointing out that if Grantley's paternal grandfather had raised a regiment in 1745, so also his maternal



grandfather "was a man of blood, who wielded steel and axe. He was, in short, a butcher in the market of Gloucester, or some adjoining town . . . ." As a piece of literature the book was trash, and was easily shown to be as full of historical inconsistencies as it was empty of story. "But it is idle to break such a cockroach as this upon the wheel. In everything the novel is stupid, ignorant, vulgar, and contemptible . . . ." And, continued the critic, Grantley Berkeley's morals, for all his loud piety, were no better ; he hinted at his conquests over women, and by his dedication of the work to his cousin, Lady Euston, insinuated what Lord Euston should avenge with a horsewhip.

No one, much less the actual author of *Berkeley Castle*, could read such a review, even to-day, without a gasp at its audacity. It was all extremely offensive, and in the part dealing with Lady Euston, positively untrue ; and it was obviously intended to wound in a very decided fashion. Too much truth had been mixed with the mere abuse, and too much falsehood. In such a circumstance the Berkeleys knew only one course, the application of the whip. Lord Segrave, then Colonel Berkeley, had supplied a precedent by whipping the Editor of the *Cheltenham Journal* in 1825. Grantley now came to town for a like purpose.

As the reviewer lurked under the shelter of his anonymity the offended author decided to

seek out the publisher himself. Accompanied by his younger brother, Craven, and a hired bully to prevent interference, Grantley, a tall, powerful man of thirteen stone, entered Fraser's shop in Regent Street and, with all the insolence which he could muster, confronted the small, slight shopkeeper. Fraser refusing to divulge the name of the critic, Grantley, without more ado, knocked him down, and while Craven stood by the door crying, "Give it him, Grantley! Damn him, give it him well," beat him horribly about the head and face with both ends of a heavy iron-handled horsewhip, until at last the poor creature in agony and terror managed to escape by the door and run up the street. Grantley was taken by a policeman before a magistrate. There he continued to flourish his whip in an ecstasy of fury, threatening to repeat the performance, but soon subsided on finding that he could not be admitted to bail unless he withdrew his menaces.

The affair caused a great sensation in London's buckish and literary circles. The *mot* went the rounds that, if Fraser's might be called the cream of periodicals, it was more accurately described as *whipped* cream. But the matter could not rest with a mere thrashing. There remained the actual author of the offensive article. Berkeley from the first must have known that it was the dissipated and unprincipled William Maginn, a learned and brilliant literary soldier of fortune,

who had written it. Further whipping, however, was out of the question, and Berkeley was obliged to accept a settlement on the duelling ground. On August 5th, two days after the assault on Fraser, the two men stood up in a field by the Harrow Road, and exchanged three shots apiece without either being able to do any serious damage to the other. Even by Berkeley's highly prejudiced account it is evident that Maginn came off the better as respects conduct, although he left Berkeley, shouting an insult, in possession of the field. When the suit for damages, which Fraser brought, was heard before Lord Abinger in December, the jury and the court heartily agreed, even after weighing the libel in mitigation, in assessing them at a hundred pounds.

In publishing his *Life and Recollections* some nineteen years later Grantley Berkeley bolstered up his grievance against Maginn by a remarkable story. Miss Letitia E. Landon, a witty and enterprising mediocrity of the rising female literary set, called Berkeley to her, according to his story, and informed him that she had some time before become the mistress of Maginn. Discovering subsequently that he was married and wishing to break with him she was pursued with threats and anonymous letters to force her to continue the relationship. Berkeley, touched by the female in distress, took up her cause. Maginn was warned off. In revenge he wrote the offensive review in *Fraser's Magazine*, and

Berkeley, in order to preserve whatever of fair reputation might still cling to "L.E.L.", based his quarrel in public entirely upon the aspersions cast at his mother and Lady Euston.

It would be impossible to affirm or deny this story with any certainty, but there are facts which render it somewhat improbable. For Berkeley showed little hesitation in revealing the matter after "L.E.L.'s" death. And he incorporated in his memoirs a letter which he says was written subsequently to the duel, and which clearly shows that the lady still had no acquaintance with him. "Dear Mr. Reynolds," it runs, "I need scarcely say that any friend of yours would be welcome ; but Mr. Grantley Berkeley is so completely the Bayard of to-day, that he ought to be received with acclamations." Indeed, it would seem much more probable that after the publication of the Fraser's article, knowing that Berkeley was an enemy of Maginn and would welcome further trouble with him, Miss Landon thought him the very man to protect her.

Whatever the truth may be, the quarrel did not cease at this point. Maginn apologized to Lord Euston for any affront, however slight, which might have been given to Lady Euston, but in January 1837, in an article dealing with the events which had taken place he justified his actions and cleverly managed to rake up once more all the filth about the Berkeley family. For this he refused to be drawn by Henry Berkeley

into another duel. And then in 1840 Grantley published another novel. *Sandron Hall, or the Days of Queen Anne*, though showing a slight improvement in technique, was almost as pitiful stuff as *Berkeley Castle*, cheap melodrama, a watery imitation of Sir Walter Scott, and nothing more. Maginn certainly had ample justification for an unmerciful attack upon such paltry trash and he did not hesitate to make it. The work was despatched with a flourish. The proper place for *Sandron Hall*, he wrote, is in the servants' hall.

If Grantley Berkeley's behaviour throughout the Fraser-Maginn affair accords but sadly with any high-minded conception of the relations which gentlemen should have with each other, he cherished nevertheless his own grandiose notions of honour. He had very positive ideas of the importance of the duel, which he had described in *Berkeley Castle* as "the chief stay of every noble and chivalric principle"; and he lamented in later days that the rising tide of humanitarianism had plunged the code of honour into difficulties which bade fair to destroy all control over brutality and bullying. Yet he himself, it must be said, gave but the most imperfect expression to noble and chivalric principles in his own conduct.

Anything in the nature of rough amusement had an irresistible appeal to him. Despite the laws which had been enacted against cock fighting, he gave his enthusiastic encouragement

to this contraband amusement, which he justified as the fairest and most commendable form of combat. In 1839 he was arrested in company with a number of roughs at a cock fight which he sponsored in a barn near Hillingdon. The incident afforded him ample occasion for raging in court and in public.

Then, at a moment when he was already sensitive from this encounter with the law, he was touched on the raw by the publication of an essay on cruelty to animals, written by a clergyman, John Styles, and awarded a large prize by the Society for the Suppression of Cruelty to Animals. It took the form of a slashing attack on field sports, as well as other forms of brutality, and made some very telling points on the subject of cock fighting. Berkeley was outraged, and not the less so as the Society which encouraged the production had already prosecuted him in the Hillingdon affair. With all that fine class feeling so characteristic of him he rushed into print to defend the country gentlemen from these slanders. It is true that he could not discover much to cavil at except a few trifling points of natural history, but he found no difficulty in swelling out his *Pamphlet, dedicated to the Noblemen, Gentlemen and Sportsmen of England, Ireland, and Scotland* with a wealth of abuse. In his distorted vision the salvation of the country and society was bound up in the main of cocks, the manly blow, the fox hunt, and the code of honour.

He was soon called upon to face about and oppose a new enemy of all that was fair, upright, and manful. The Anti-Corn Law agitators, who were making life miserable for country gentlemen in those days, turned their guns upon field sports and alleged all manner of abuses, brutal administration of the game laws, unfairness of magistrates, and devastation of crops by game. Berkeley's *Pamphlet in Defence of the Game Laws*, a blustering, truculent reply to all these charges, conceded not an inch to the enemy, but roundly declared the Game Laws a sound and rational system, beneficial to proprietor, tenant, and poor alike. If there was poaching, it arose not from the severity of the laws but from the laxness of enforcement. It could be put down only by vigorous measures. Berkeley boasted of his numerous personal encounters with poachers. What they needed was a punch on the head.

Overnight the "punch on the head" philosophy became famous and it exposed its author to no little ridicule. For this he cared enough, despite his denial that any criticism had pierced his armour, to write a slashing *Reply to the Press*, defending his views and complaining of the personalities to which he had been subjected. *Punch*, which had playfully described him as one of those farmer's friends who were likely to prove the death of the farmer, he accused of adopting "a tone of low and malicious personality". Coming from him such a charge has a rather

hollow ring. But it was in the Committee on the Game Laws that Berkeley fought his real battle,—and made his greatest mistake. Not content with browbeating the witnesses against the game system, he insisted on taking the stand himself; and John Bright, leader of the attacking forces, harried and hunted him remorselessly from one insupportable statement to another. A violent scene took place when Berkeley, caught in certain mathematical absurdities, finally refused point-blank to answer Bright's questions.

From that time the feud between these two intrepid class champions was one which time could never heal. Bright made no mistake in declaring that when Berkeley became a legislator a first-class gamekeeper was spoilt; and his enemy loved to relate how Cobden had told him that if Bright had not been a Quaker, so fierce were his combative instincts that he would have become a pugilist. Berkeley, indeed, lost no opportunity for abuse. Bright, he declared in the second edition of his Game Law pamphlet, was another Alderman Cute; and in his *Reply to the Press* he raved unrestrainedly at the "buttonless" argument of the Quaker "surface-seeker".

After the session the London *Times* made its columns amusing by publishing an angry correspondence between the two fighting cocks, who insisted on quarrelling over Parliamentary tactics even during the vacation. In the following year, determined to have the last word and the



victory in the Game Law Committee, Berkeley came prepared with a cloud of witnesses, to rebut the evidence collected during the previous session, bullied them as before, and raked up all the scandal he could to discredit the case which Bright had made out. In the end the majority of the Committee stood by him, not so much perhaps because of his championship—for he had hardly showed to advantage—as because the whole investigation of the Game Laws had been but a manœuvre in the Anti-Corn Law struggle.

But on the whole, Grantley Berkeley cut no great figure in the House of Commons. Whether he protested against sabbatarian legislation, defended the Game Laws—one might better write attacked the opponents of the Game Laws—or complained of the miserable state of Berbice, where he seems to have held some worthless plantations, he only revealed his narrowness, his violence, and his prejudices. He made no speeches worth recording, supported no principles, unless Berkeleyism be called a principle, and never contrived to take an active part without doing so in a fashion at once undignified, offensive, and discreditable.

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In the end he fell out with his eldest brother, but he did so only after having submitted to his will too long for rebellion to have the look of virtue. Earl Fitzhardinge, as the former Colonel

William Berkeley was now called, found that he had no further use for Grantley. The orange had been sucked dry and was now to be cast aside. Controversy arose over the financial subsidy which was to have compensated the Parliamentarian for his services, and a jealous quarrel began between Grantley and his brother's mistress. He abetted his sister Mary in her departure from the house in Spring Gardens because the mistress had come to reside there. In short the differences soon became an open quarrel and Fitzhardinge, alleging unpopularity and misuse of the patronage, called upon his brother to surrender his place in the House of Commons. Not letting slip the opportunity to caricature "The Happy Family", *Punch* depicted Grantley as an effeminate fop calling on Mr. Punch for assistance, crying plaintively, "Please Sir, my big brother's going to give me 'a punch on the head.'"

But *Punch* did him an injustice if it wished to imply that he would capitulate at the first onset. On the contrary the West Gloucestershire election in 1847, which would compare not inaptly with the famous Eatanswill affair of *Pickwick Papers*, has seldom been surpassed for violence and knavery. An affiliation charge against Grantley came to a head in the courts just before the election, but it was non-suited. As his wife was a Roman Catholic he himself was accused of being a Jesuit. Riots, carried

on with the assistance of imported ruffians, sullied the fair name of West Gloucestershire. And the Lord-Lieutenant, Earl Fitzhardinge, ordered his brother to give up the command of the local yeomanry militia. But it was all to no avail, and although the assailed Member had almost no resources to oppose to the £30,000 thrown into the struggle against him—if we may believe his own story—, righteousness triumphed.

But not for long. Attempts to take up the offensive against the castle faction met with no success. In vain were petitions got up demanding the dismissal of the Lord-Lieutenant from his position. Grantley did not hesitate to drag the quarrel into the House of Commons during a debate on ballot reform, alleging the most unblushing coercion of the Gloucester farmers by their powerful landlord. And then, as if to afford every facility to his enemies, he wrote a pamphlet, which appeared in 1850 under the title "Two letters addressed to the landed and manufacturing interests . . . on the just maintenance of free trade." He had never yet put pen to paper without exposing himself to a telling attack. But he was like the Bourbons, never learning anything from his experiences, and now his fatal glibness put into his opponents' hands a weapon which he could not parry.

His stand, innocuous enough as a mere argument, was simple. Reforms had been made too precipitately. The abolition of slavery without

provision for adequate protection of property and a supply of labour had ruined the West Indies. Likewise the repeal of the Corn Laws without reduction of the burdens on land had injured the agricultural interests in England. A moderate eight shilling duty should therefore be set up and maintained until Free Trade could be endured without harm. Fitzhardinge now had a handle against his brother which he was not slow to use, for Grantley was revealed as "desirous of depriving the people of their bread". He appeared to have deserted the popular interest and the popular interest deserted him. When the election of 1852 took place he discovered that he could make no headway and after a brief struggle he withdrew his candidacy.

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From this time he lived on in the quieter, if less flattering, retirement of private life, busy with his sport, his writing, and a certain curious interest in natural history. Long before, he had left Harrold Hall, the scene of such bitter experiences. In the midst of Parliamentary activities and local hostility he had become convinced that he must sell his hounds, and finally when his seven years lease expired he set off to Teffont manor house near Salisbury, taking care first to supply himself with a stock of hand-reared partridges and pheasants. Quarrels soon broke out with his new landlord and after two years

he removed again, this time to Beacon Lodge on the cliffs above Christchurch Bay, where he lived for almost a quarter of a century in the presence of a magnificent view across the water to the distant Needles.

There, even before his exit from Parliament, he was primarily the sportsman and sporting writer. His zeal for game preservation on his own lands and in the neighbourhood soon made him the object of a cordial hatred to the poachers, who had previously had no experience of a strict game system. New Forest, conveniently near Beacon Lodge, afforded him especially rich opportunities for indulging his passion. When the government decided upon the extermination of the deer he had almost seven years of deer stalking, notwithstanding his strongly expressed opinion against the policy. Like Maria Theresa at the time of the Polish partition, he wept but he kept on taking.

In spite of his absorption in these attractions, the *furor scribendi* was still upon him. There was nothing he would not try his hand at. The inadequacy of his scanty resources led him at one time to produce highly moral but fugitive caricatures for public consumption at a sovereign each. An intrepid pamphlet announced his confident discovery by experiment that the potato disease was "a vegetable epidemic" in the nature of a fever, caused by excessive use of fertilizer. In 1854 he produced the only book which he was

properly fitted to write, his *Reminiscences of a Huntsman*. It was a diffuse but instructive account of his varied sporting experiences, now a precious collectors' item, and even then recognized as something of a classic by Whyte-Melville in one of his novels.

In the preface to these *Reminiscences* Berkeley has described himself as he then was, a tall, heavy, large-framed man, still in the best of physical condition after his half century and more of strenuous life. For his thirteen stone weight does not seem excessive for a height of six feet and two inches. He was beginning to feel the approach of old age, noticed the crow's-foot on his face and the grey in his hair, "and most of all, I feel it in not being able to quit the ground as I used to do, when desirous of jumping over an obstacle. Otherwise," he continued in a characteristic observation, "I am as much pleased with hunting a mouse or rat, fishing for a gudgeon or perch,—when no other pastime is to be had,—as I used to be when a boy . . . ."

It was in consequence of the *Reminiscences* that he made a visit to France in 1856. The Vicomte d'Anchald, having read of the remarkable exploits of Berkeley's bloodhound, Druid, came to visit Berkeley and see Druid trail deer in the New Forest. It happened to be one of the few times in history when Englishmen and Frenchmen have loved each other as brothers, and by way of returning the favour Grantley

sojourned for a month on the Vicomte's French estate as his guest. But, French ways not being his ways, all did not go well. Of the hospitality which he received he had no complaints to make, but he returned filled with disgust of French sport. There was nothing too harsh to be said about it. The French hounds were all babblers and shirkers ; the only ones which would hunt true were drafts from English packs. All without exception were badly fed, badly managed, and generally neglected. Berkeley, the former Master of Fox Hounds, rode out repeatedly with his hosts loaded for boar, but always without success, although his companions never seemed to have any difficulty. It may be that his want of success coloured his views about French hounds ; and the same difficulty may account for his bringing the journey at once to its climax and its termination by a row with the cabmen at Havre.

Hardly had he enlightened the British public with his account of *A Month in the Forests of France*, when he began to consider a more extended journey to the land of the American bison. Although the day of the hurrying tourist had not yet dawned he set an example which, in view of the conditions of transportation at the time, perhaps entitles him to rank as the first of the tribe. Embarking at Liverpool on August 20th, 1859, he travelled by ship and train to St. Louis, Missouri, spent a month on the plains, and

reached England again on December 4th. For a man of his tastes and views American institutions in those days could hardly prove very enticing. From the moment that he noticed the small boats in New York Harbour refusing to make way for the incoming Cunarder he sensed the evil effects of excessive democracy. The democratic omnibuses, the tobacco spitting, and the American habit of slouching in such a posture as to appear to be sitting on the shoulders, these and other phenomena completed the refutation of the equality gospel. Nor did he escape the usual tall stories of the day. One boastful American gave him this account of what marvels the "Kentucky men" could perform with fire-arms: "Just this, yes, sir; they place an old pea rifle barrel horizontally at one hundred yards, and then with their other rifle fill up the small barrel with bullets without missing a shot, I reckon; yes, sir!"

Under these afflictions and the not insignificant hardships of the long journey into the interior he bore up as well as he could, and finally arrived in St. Louis to discover himself the centre of some interest. For he had advertised himself well in advance as bent upon showing the Americans how buffalo ought to be killed. But so expensive had the journey been that St. Louis would have proved what the inhabitants tauntingly declared it was, "the turning-back place of the English sportsman", had not their contempt



roused him to meet the challenge. So on borrowed funds he proceeded diligently to Fort Riley in the midst of the plains. There he found among the officers of the army the first fully congenial society in America, and in company with two of them carried out his sporting project with complete success.

On his return he delivered two lectures in St. Joseph and St. Louis on his impressions of America. He did not neglect the opportunity to criticize the "lawless and murderous misrule" which characterized the American duel and to issue a warning likewise that the American Union was in danger. His admonitions fell on stony ground. Then, after visiting Niagara Falls, which interested him almost more than anything else on his whole journey, he took ship once more at New York and was home before Christmas, prepared to announce authoritatively to the English public that America's "too great democracy, her republicanism", was about to destroy the United States.

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He did not return to a happy home. The stormy fate which, not always unwelcome, clung to his career, invaded even his family. His wife, whom he had married in 1824, was a Roman Catholic. Questions consequently arose concerning the education of his two sons, Swinburne and Edward. It was arranged that the

elder should attend a thoroughly Protestant school and the younger a Catholic ; but the perverseness of fate converted the Protestant to Catholicism and his brother to Protestantism. It need not be surprising then that the two unhappy parents became estranged. Mrs. Berkeley left Beacon Lodge in 1860, brought a suit, apparently upon false charges, in the Consistory Court, and generally convinced Grantley that she was a " Jesuit ", a term which he used in a rather elastic sense.

With his home and family broken up and the last refuge of peace lost to him, Grantley Berkeley nevertheless refused to bow down to misfortune. His indomitable spirit, inexhaustible energy, and reckless determination to say what he thought in the most offensive terms led him always rather to court than to avoid controversy. Having sent to the press his account of *The English Sportsman in the Western Prairies*, he turned to the task of writing his memoirs. The first two volumes appeared in 1865. There displayed the public found all his exaggerated pride in his good breeding and noble blood, no whit diminished by questions of fact, all his saccharine air of superiority, his confidence that he could do no wrong, his readiness to ride rough shod over all low people, and withal an unblushing coarseness which gave the lie to his claims of sanctity. The book was a resounding success, but for what reasons may be judged perhaps by a review which

appeared in the *Temple Bar* magazine. "The author's candour," declared the critic, "is such that he spares neither himself, his kindred, (n)or his friends. Had his bitterest foe written these volumes, he could not have so battered the Berkeley family as the present writer has done, with the advantages possessed by a man very intimately acquainted with his subject. Whether any other gentleman would have so written of his mother, father, brothers, and friends as Mr. Berkeley has done, we do not care to inquire."

For he had told in the plainest possible terms the whole tale of the Berkeley family, not without sinister interpretations and accusations of plots, intrigues, and crimes committed by his own parents and brothers. Since his quarrel with Earl Fitzhardinge he had been completely at odds with the Berkeley Castle group. He now looked upon himself as the heir presumptive to the Earldom, and when his eldest brother died in 1857 had stoutly protested against giving Maurice, the next eldest, any title associated with the old peerage, with the result that Maurice in 1861 became Baron Fitzhardinge instead of Lord Berkeley. When the *Life and Recollections* appeared all the other surviving sons, seeing in it a revival of the painful facts which they had hoped would be forgotten, and an attack as devastating as that for which Grantley himself had fought a duel with Maginn, issued an indignant reply denying the whole story.

This *Reply* only served as the occasion for an additional two volumes of recollections with more detail and self-assurance than ever. But the game had been played out. Berkeley was more than ever an outcast. He had already broken up his home at Beacon Lodge, and after a short stay at Winkton on the Avon, taken up his residence in 1863 at Alderney Hut on the heath near Wimborne. There he found himself possessed of a small cottage, which he did not disdain to dignify by the name Alderney Manor, surrounded by an almost waste and barren land of gorse and heather. His reduced circumstances had all but forced him into the life of a hermit. In such a home, almost in the wilderness, he spent the last years of his life with his pen, his dogs, his game, and his wild fowl.

His writings had made him something of a celebrity in the world of sport, and in his retirement he was in a fair way to become a legend. If some inclined to sneer at a man who had deserted fox hunting, which could be carried on only in the presence of others, for more solitary sport, and to suggest that the brilliance of his exploits in distant lands owed something to the difficulty of independent confirmation, others were content to look back to the golden haze of the past enveloping "his tall figure, dressed in yellow plush coat, white cord breeches, and hunting cap, in the midst of his hounds, playing with them, as was his invariable custom", and

to praise in generous terms the mighty deeds of the Nimrod of French forests and Western plains. His pronouncements took on an oracular character. The Earl of Malmesbury, who resided at Heron Court, not far from the home of Berkeley during his declining years, thought it worth while to note his prescription for hiring a gamekeeper. In interviewing the man in velveteen Berkeley looked first at the applicant's knees. If his trousers were clean there, nothing could convince the sportsman that he would make a faithful guardian of the game, for Grantley Berkeley seemed to believe that a gamekeeper should spend as much of his time on his knees trapping vermin as a priest must spend in praying for their human counterparts.

To visitors at Heron Court, Berkeley was an interesting curiosity. A party which spent the day at his house on September 6th, 1861, (probably during the Winkton interval) found him resident in "a pretty, wild place", only wanting the resources of someone with more in pocket than Grantley to convert it into a lovely spot. For amusement the fine ladies and gentlemen pulled up "a number of lines which Berkeley had laid along the banks of the river, and caught several fine eels". On another occasion Grantley and his son attended a croquet party and made themselves sufficiently ridiculous by appearing in Garibaldi costume, complete with feathered hats and red shirts. So tamed was the fiery

gamecock of Cranford House and Harrold Hall.

To the last he was busy turning out the gossip volumes so characteristic of him, compounded of rather feeble fiction, ghost stories, recollections, Nature lore, and pet theories. Now it was *Anecdotes of the Upper Ten Thousand*, now a pamphlet on the war in France, and, last of all, *Fact against Fiction*. He never tired of discussing hydrophobia and lamenting the destruction of valuable hounds because of a misunderstanding of its symptoms. The *Tales of Life and Death* were just such as a not very penetrating, but quite sentimental, old gentleman might be expected to write.

Berkeley the obstreperous, the overbearing, the quarrelsome, was sinking back calmly into the arms of old age, mellowing and sweetening like a ripe fruit which has passed its days of sour bitterness. Always a lover of animal pets, though formerly such a persecutor of wild life, he surrounded himself with wild fowl, hares, and pheasants, and made them so tame that they came at his call. And so his vanity was at last flattered to the full. He had, indeed, outlived his age. In February 1881, respected and beloved by his neighbours as a kind, gentle, and considerate old man, he quietly passed away. No one in the days of the M.F.H. of the Oakley Hounds could have prophesied such an end.

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The main course of Berkeley's life is indicated in his *Life and Recollections*. Charles Kent's article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (IV, 356-8) is informative. A somewhat lurid light is thrown on his origins by the investigation carried out by the House of Lords in connection with the disputed title to the earldom (*Minutes of evidence taken before the Committee for Privileges on the Earl of Berkeley's pedigree in the year 1799* [reprinted 1811]; *Minutes of evidence taken before the Committee of Privileges to whom the petition of William Fitzhardinge Berkeley, claiming as of right to be Earl of Berkeley, was referred, Parliamentary papers*, 1811) and in Joseph Farington's diary (*The Farington Diary*, 8 vols., James Greig, ed., New York, 1923-8). *The Sporting Magazine* chronicled some of the more outstanding episodes of Berkeley's hunting life, not least of them the Baker incident of 1826. The trial which resulted from this affair was reported in F. A. Carrington and J. Payne: *Reports*, III, 32. Discussions of Berkeley as a sportsman are to be found in *Baily's Magazine* as follows:

"Osbaldeston and Russell," vol. X (June 1865), 10-19.

"The Old Squire and Mr. Grantley Berkeley," vol. X (August 1865), 118-24.



"The late Hon. Grantley Berkeley," vol. XXXVII (April 1881), 71-3.

The Fraser side of the Maginn affair is dealt with at length in *Fraser's Magazine*. The original review appeared as "Mr. Grantley Berkeley and his novel", in vol. XIV (August 1836), 242-7, and the consequences are dealt with in "The trial of Fraser v. Berkeley and another, and Berkeley v. Fraser," in vol. XV (January 1837), 100-37, and in "Defence of Fraser's Magazine in the Berkeley affair," *loc. cit.*, 137-43. Notice also Michael Sadleir: *Bulwer: a Panorama* (Boston, 1931), 387-8 and Miriam M. H. Thrall, *Rebellious Fraser's* (New York, 1934).

John Styles's pamphlet, *The Animal Creation: its claim on our Humanity stated and enforced* (London, 1839) is the publication to which Berkeley replied in his *A Pamphlet dedicated to the Noblemen [etc.]*, cited above. A discussion of these is to be found in *Fraser's Magazine*, XX (August 1839), 233-47, under the title "Sydney Smith, John Styles, and Grantley Berkeley". Aside from his own pamphlets, Berkeley's attitude on the Game Laws is well indicated in the *Report from the Select Committee on the Game Laws*. (2 vols., *Parliamentary Papers*, 1846.) This subject the present author has dealt with from a more general point of view in an article, "The attack on the English Game Laws in the Forties," *Journal of Modern History*, IV (March 1932), 18-37.

Light is thrown on Berkeley's later years by passages in the Earl of Malmesbury's *Memoirs of an ex-Minister. An Autobiography* (new ed., London, 1885), and by Rosa Mackenzie Kettle, "Grantley F. Berkeley," *New Monthly Magazine*, new ser., IV (1881), 429-32, and a poem by the same author entitled "Passing away," *loc. cit.*, 433-5. The reply of Grantley's brothers on the subject of his accusations is: Lord Fitzhardinge [Maurice F. F. Berkeley], Augustus Fitzhardinge Berkeley, Francis Henry Fitzhardinge Berkeley, and Thomas Moreton Berkeley: *Reply to some passages in a book entitled "My Life and Recollections, by the Hon. Grantley F. Berkeley" by the other surviving sons of the late Earl and Countess of Berkeley* (London, 1865).

## CHAPTER IV

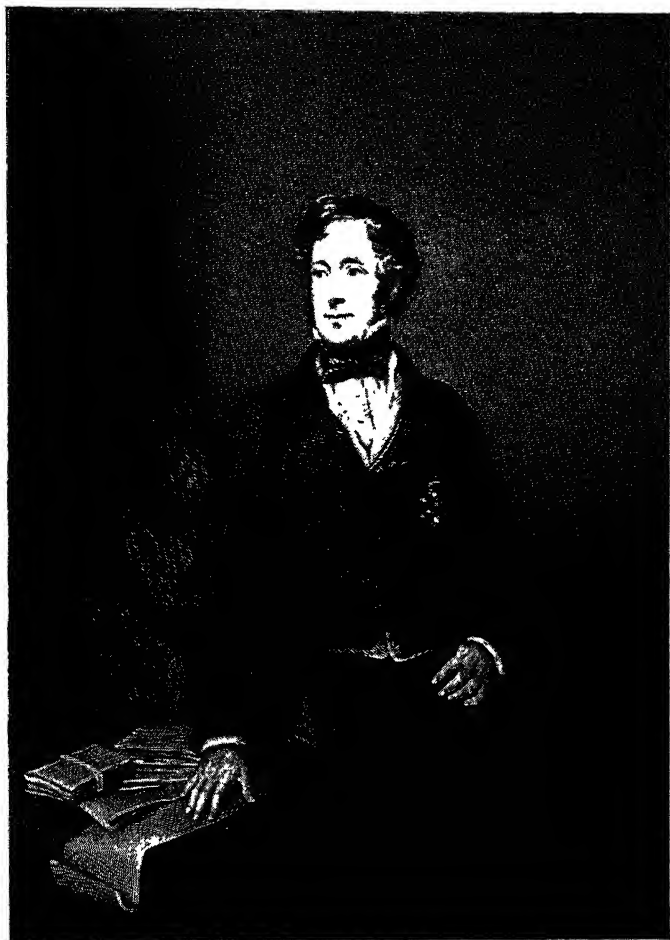
### THE FIFTH DUKE OF RICHMOND

It is a curious fact that the records of the past reveal no great dukes. There have been great men who became dukes, but no dukes who became great men. And the same observation might be made concerning lesser ranks of the English nobility ; if it has in this connection slightly less validity still it is true enough to show a definite tendency. Two dukes leap at once to the thought as exceptions. But both the Duke of Marlborough and the Duke of Wellington received their titles in recognition of what they had already done. Would they have merited such honours if they had been born to the purple ? On the whole it seems to be essentially true that to be born heir to a dukedom is a bad way to begin life if one wishes to climb to the pinnacles of lasting fame.

How can we account for this singular characteristic of these noble creatures ? Obviously one explanation is statistical. The proportion of dukes to the rest of the population does not make a very large fraction, and hence, even if they achieved their share of success, only a very few of them would get to the top of Olympus. But the fact is that an exalted nobleman neither

realizes nor has an opportunity to realize, neither suspects nor has occasion to suspect, that his name will be of small account in the high ranks of Valhalla. He does not know that Burke's *Peerage* is a roll of honour, not of greatness. He dominates what he surveys, he is honoured, loaded with titles, demanded as chairman and subscriber for every occasion and every charity. If he has a conscience he is forced, unless some miracle has turned him from the normal course, to give his attention to a million affairs of business; he must serve as a magistrate; he must function as a solon in the House of Lords; he must manage his estates (or at least make sure that he is not cheated too badly and that his lands do not become worthless); he must appoint to many offices; he must give his countenance and patronage to the church; he must look out for the poor. In short he must be everywhere, slight nobody, encourage everybody, which is to say, he must scatter his efforts and live the life of a jack-of-all-trades. Being a duke, indeed, is worse than being a king. For a king is great if he rules well; but a duke who rules as efficiently in his own sphere is sometimes suspected of being a dolt.

A not uninstrusive sample of these noble lords is to be found in the fifth Duke of Richmond. He was not a man of greatly superior talents, but he possessed a highly developed sense of duty and lived a very respectable, industrious, and human life—for a man in his position. It



THE DUKE OF RICHMOND



was a mad dog (or fox) that made Charles Gordon Lennox the fifth Duke of Richmond in 1819. His father, the fourth to bear the title, recently appointed Governor-General of the British colonies in Canada, had attempted to act as peacemaker in a dispute between a dog and a fox on the banks of the St. Lawrence. As the not uncommon reward for interference he was bitten, and a few weeks later he died in great agony of hydrophobia. Charles, his eldest son, had attained his twenty-eighth year when this strange event took place, and was therefore already a mature man at his succession to the power, wealth, and cares of a great landed estate.

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Charles's earlier years had formed his character under the true influence of his class. Westminster School, without giving him in the least degree studious habits or more than the slightest acquaintance with literature, had laid the ground for later traditions of his manly qualities. If we may believe these stories—and everyone realizes the large admixture of fiction in most accounts of school days—he gained the affection of master and pupils alike, showed himself a model student (prospective dukes not being expected to study), took a prominent part in the battles with gangs of boys from Tothill Fields, and thrashed an insolent bully. Completely devoid of inconvenient genius or the elements of

greatness, he was a lovable and good natured lad, already infused with a sense of responsibility for the weak and a courage which enabled him to protect the younger boys from the severity of the fagging system. In short, he was in a fair way to become a thorough gentleman.

There was no thought of a University, for the military tradition had a strong hold on the Lennoxes, and in 1809 the Earl of March, as Charles was called after his father succeeded to the dukedom in 1806, became an ensign in the Eighth Garrison Battalion. His father, the duke, being then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, March proceeded thither to act as his aide-de-camp. But he had already been too long at school, and had developed, as a young man among boys, the obstinacy, *entêtement*, and aversion to compromise which characterized him throughout his life. The attempts of his mother to "civilize" him, as so often happens, only aggravated the trouble, although, according to his aunt, Lady Sarah Napier, "in fact his natural good sense & delightful head led him to adopt every thing that was right". Still, charming as he might be in spite of this slight qualification, the position of aide to his own father seemed hardly the most suitable for a spirited young man while the titanic struggle with Napoleon was proceeding upon the Continent.

Later tradition had it that the desire for more action than Dublin afforded took Lord March

to Spain, but Lady Sarah, with a true auntly want of charity, suggested that the duke feared lest "a Ld. Lt's son would be spoilt", and sent him off to his good friend and former colleague, Viscount Wellington, who had but recently resigned the Chief Secretaryship of Ireland to take command in the Peninsula. No doubt each of these explanations contains a measure of truth. March, then, was gazetted as lieutenant in June 1810, in the 13th Light Dragoons, and arriving in Portugal on the 24th of the next month, took up his duties as aide-de-camp and assistant military secretary to Wellington.

He came well recommended, for he carried despatches from the Secretary at War, Lord Liverpool, describing him as "a fine young man ; but," continued the Secretary, "like all persons of his age and rank in life, he will be the better for some attention, and occasional good advice." Wellington was quite ready to believe all this, took to him at once, and wrote home about him in glowing terms, not hesitating to describe March as "really the finest and best disposed fellow I ever saw". Well might he speak so of his handsome, active, genial young aide. So it was that March was taken into the most spirited circle of gentlemen in Europe. They were all aristocrats, sons of the landed rulers of England, members of the class born to govern. And they were all fox hunters. Wellington maintained a pack of hounds which they put to good use



whenever, as must often be the case in soldiering, opportunity offered.

But they were by no means idlers, for the French gave them work to do, and Wellington trained his staff as rigorously as his army. Even if the guerrilla bands of the Peninsula were friendly to the English, riding with despatches often called for a courage and an alertness beyond that of the soldiers in the line. The strain, indeed, proved too much for March's none too strong constitution. Illness repeatedly put him *hors de combat*, fever laid him low, and finally, while he was participating, as captain in an infantry regiment, in the close action of the Battle of Orthez, a musket ball wounded him so severely in the chest that his life was for the moment despaired of. The "ball of Orthez", never extracted, left its possessor's health precarious for the rest of his days. But he returned to the service, served at Waterloo as aide to the Prince of Orange, saved that vainglorious gentleman's life, and came away himself unscathed. His mother, the Duchess, who marked off from the programme of the famous ball of June 15th the names of her guests killed in the battle, did not have to label the name of her son with the mournful word "dead".

With the end of the campaign his military career, except for later war games with the Sussex militia and a flurry of excitement over the Crimea, was finished. He would have loved to go on

with the life of a soldier, and never, indeed, seemed quite to realize that he had ceased to be one. The only prospect that remained was colonial service, for which he certainly was not fit, and in July 1816 he retired on half pay to take up more seriously his duties as country gentleman at home.

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A fuller life shortly opened up for him. His marriage to the Marquis of Anglesey's daughter, Lady Caroline Paget, a woman of no little charm and distinction of manner, associated him with one of the celebrated beauties of the day, of whose attractions George IV himself, no mean connoisseur, deigned to take pointed notice. At Ascot races in 1825 "Prinney", as Greevey called him, came "bowling along the course in his carriage and four" and "played off his nods and winks and kissing his hand" to her as if he were still the young spark of twenty years before. Such a marriage increased, elaborated, and complicated the intricate connections and relationships among the ruling classes, while it provided in half a score of children the means of still further ramifications.

Not the least important of his connections was supplied by his mother, through whom he became heir of the Duke of Gordon, although the inheritance, with the name, did not come to

him until 1836. But his mother bequeathed him troubles, too, as he found when his dukedom began in 1819 on the news of his father's horrible death. For the hostess of the Waterloo ball had led the Richmond fortunes into sad straits at the gaming table, losing £30,000, so Joseph Farington relates, to Marshal Blücher. Perhaps it was because of these excesses of his proud and splendid parent that the new Duke was forced into ways of caution, economy, and business from the beginning, and found it convenient to close Goodwood House for a few years in mourning for his father. He did, indeed, owe much to his sire. With the title and estates the fourth Duke handed down to him a sociability and affability which rarely failed him. Farington has recorded the unaffected comradeship of the father, who would—rare phenomenon—even consent without demur to drink water with a teetotaler, so determined was he to enjoy a convivial occasion. But, broken at last by hard living, he was already an old man at fifty-five when he went on his fatal trip to Canada. Perhaps this “‘orrible example” with its implied warning against bibulous habits was not the least valuable part of the fifth Duke's inheritance.

Be that as it may, the young Duke of Richmond remained conspicuous for his temperance in an age of excesses. All indications point to a sober, determined, and responsible nobleman, conscious of his station in society, aware that dukes had

duties, and prepared according to his conception of them to acquit himself with honour. No scandal could cling to the name of such a manifestly upright man. "Talk about the Duchess and Lord George Bentinck" in 1830 made only the very slightest ripple in his family affairs, and Charles Greville has supplied the completest assurance of its want of foundation. The notorious Harriette Wilson, whose memoirs appeared in 1825, hinted at future revelations immortalizing the illicit amours of the Duke of Richmond, among others, but as these never appeared it is only fair to assume that, whether or not her silence was purchased, her mischievous innuendoes deserve little credit. Few public men of his day could surpass him for the spotlessness of his reputation.

For he was a public man whether he wished to be so or no. The Pocket Borough system, indeed, had made him a member of the House of Commons for Chichester from 1812 and he only abandoned the seat to his brother, Lord George Lennox, on entering the House of Lords. But if he was a senator, he was by no means a Parliamentarian. No subject but one intimately connected with rural matters could for a long time induce him to speak, and even such topics but infrequently. Although tradition has him rising once or twice in connection with the Game Laws, he seems to have said nothing at all worth recording during his seven years in the House of

Commons. It took him until 1824 to reach the point of rapping out his first crisp sentences for the pages of Hansard's debates. The style of the remarks, a feature of the House of Lords for years to come, had such a character of frankness, abruptness, and decision that they may be considered an epitome of his public manner. Earl Grosvenor had introduced a measure to legalize the sale of game, then a contraband article in the market. The Duke of Richmond rose during the debate on the second reading, and opposed the bill. "If it were to pass," he said, "he did not see the possibility of ever convicting a poacher." That was all, but it was a breath of fresh air let into the murky atmosphere in which landed gentlemen were attempting, under cover of concession, to preserve their sporting privileges at the cost of common sense.

On this subject he declared himself a thorough reformer, heartily seconding Lord Wharncliffe's attempt radically to alter the system by which only the landed classes had the right to sport. With characteristic exaggeration he declared the existing system, under which game was preserved merely by force, to be so bad that he would vote for any alteration that might be proposed. His only other concern seemed to be the price of wool, which had fallen greatly since the duty had been reduced from sixpence to a penny in 1825. As he had in his eye, while moving for a

Select Committee on the question, his own flock of South Downs it might seem that he was considering rather baldly his own personal interests, but he was never a man to be troubled by appearances. The fact was, as the Committee conclusively proved, that the English had bred so exclusively for meat that they had disregarded wool, and it had deteriorated in consequence until it could not, for the moment, compete with the foreign product.

It is evident that down to 1829 the Duke of Richmond had cut no great figure. The leadership of the Duke of Wellington, whose victories in the field had brought Englishmen to the somewhat illogical conclusion that the Iron Duke was a statesman, he showed himself ready and willing to accept. But when Wellington and Robert Peel took the Clare election as an imperative bid on the part of Ireland for Roman Catholic political equality, Richmond refused to play the chameleon and embarked upon an uncompromising, bitter, and stout opposition. His bluff, hearty affability was metamorphosed into blunt contempt and sarcasm. "He should," he said, "feel it to be his duty, as a peer of that House, to give every possible opposition to the measures now in progress; which in his opinion were decidedly hostile to the best interests of the country, and he trusted that his opposition would be found manly, fair, and open." He scorned the popular clamour. A change of political

opinions was completely incomprehensible to him.

Without ever making a set speech or talking at any length, without ever exhibiting any oratorical capacity beyond an exaggerated terseness, yet by rising at every opportunity and never failing to assert in the most downright manner his opposition to the government, he rose rapidly to the position of a leader. He was, as Greville well said, "prejudiced, narrow-minded, illiterate, and ignorant, good-looking, good-humoured, unaffected, unassuming, and a duke", and his boldness under the circumstances brought him to the front. On March 3rd, 1829, when the King's scruples about his coronation oath brought about the momentary resignation of the ministry, Richmond seems to have been marked to take the position of First Lord of the Treasury or the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland if a new administration could have been formed. Nothing came of this possibility except that George IV, now nearing the end of his reign, showed marked attention to Richmond from that moment forward.

Catholic emancipation being carried and the Tory party destroyed by the event, the Duke of Richmond lost no time in allying himself with the Whigs in search of revenge. The rural disorder and distress of 1830 supplied him with ample material, and especially so as Sussex was one of the counties most seriously disturbed. So

concerned was he over the matter that for the first time in his parliamentary career he made a speech of some length. He stated boldly the need for government action. The poor were in a deplorable condition. Rural labourers were not paid adequately for their work, and were harnessed to carts and degraded to the labour of brutes. Was it any wonder that the poor were heard to declare they preferred being paupers without work to being paupers with it? His own motion on March 18th for a Select Committee to inquire into the state of the poor he pressed with all the vigour of his new-found passion.

Throughout the last days of the Wellington ministry Richmond continued more active than ever before and there can be no doubt that he played a not insignificant part in its overthrow. He had already declared his willingness to accept a reasonable measure of reform in the House of Commons : " He would be one of the last to yield to the clamours of the mob ; but he agreed with those who thought that some reform was necessary, and he was prepared to concede the demands of the people." Lord Grey, the new Prime Minister, accordingly took him for a valuable political acquisition and put him at the head of the Ordnance Department ; but the spectacle of a half-pay lieutenant-colonel in such a position (and one at odds with the Duke of Wellington, too) so outraged the army that after an attempt to palm off on him the Mastership of the Horse,



Grey was fain to give him the Post Office. The new Postmaster-General, seeing he had somehow got into a position usually looked upon as particularly lucrative, and being excessively proud of his independence and superiority to financial considerations, at first somewhat grotesquely refused to accept the salary, but was persuaded by Greville to think better of it.

Richmond's somewhat sudden rise to eminence would in another man have looked like the work of a political schemer who had calculated nicely the moment when the Tories were about to disintegrate and then made himself valuable to the opposite party. Of such motives no one could suspect the Duke of Richmond. He was the least ambitious of men, and above all things not a trimmer. And he by no means forgot that at heart he was still a Tory. He entered heartily into the business of administration and expressed to Greville his delight at "Lord Grey's candour and unassuming bearing in the Cabinet." But he seemed to conceive his chief mission as member of a reforming government to consist in preventing too radical a change in the constitution of the House of Commons. He associated himself therefore with Edward Stanley, Sir James Graham, and the other moderates to prevent an extreme measure, and from first to last he was the only man who would stand up to Lord Durham, whose radical passions constituted a serious danger to the whole project.

Professor George Macaulay Trevelyan<sup>1</sup> has stated that "Palmerston, Lansdowne, and Richmond, the chiefs of the 'moderate' party, seem to have grumbled more against the Bill after it had been brought before the public, than during these preliminary counsels in the secrecy of the Cabinet." But, if we are to believe Creevey, Richmond and Durham "fought like cat and dog" from the moment that Richmond was admitted to the committee which was drawing up the measure. And to the revolutionary expedient of making peers in order to force the Bill through the House of Lords Richmond was opposed from the moment in which it came under consideration.

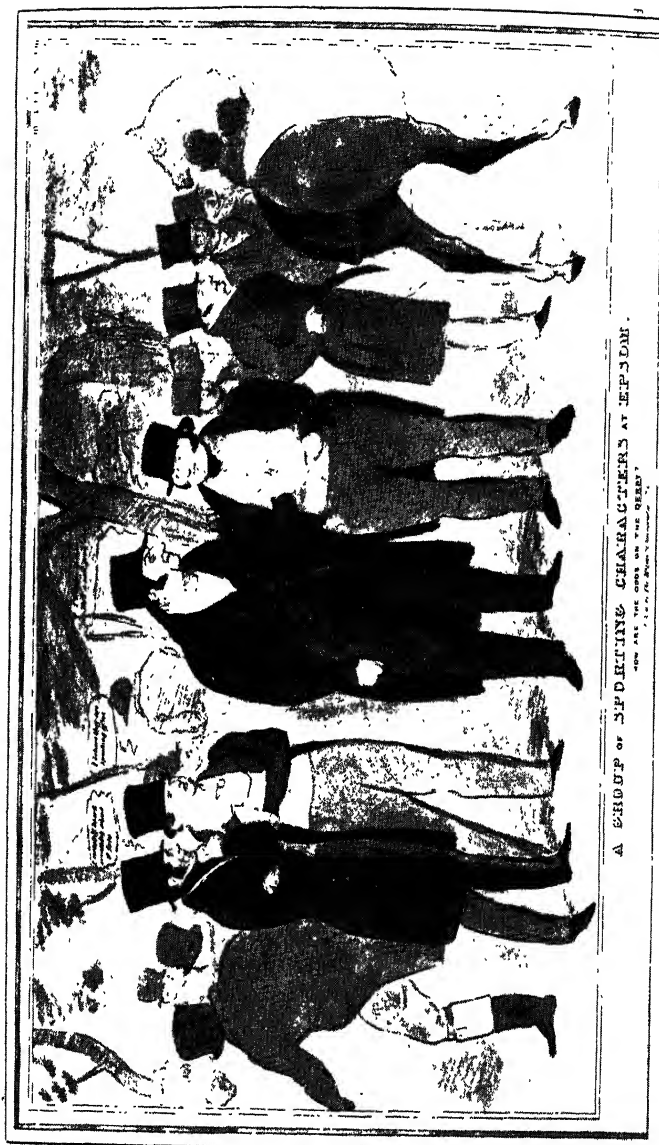
But not only in this respect did he serve as a moderating influence ; he was the only member of the Cabinet who was quite palatable to the King. On the first day of Ascot races in 1831 the Duke of Richmond rode with the King in his calèche as the royal procession arrived, Lord Grey occupying one of the coaches which followed ; and at the entertainments in that week—Greville describes the dinner on the Friday, forty guests attending, the room insufferably hot, the King drinking with everybody, and falling asleep when the meal had been finished—Richmond was a prominent figure. At the time of the government's first and temporary resignation after the

<sup>1</sup> George Macaulay Trevelyan : *Lord Grey of the Reform Bill* (New York, 1920), 275.

Lords had voted against them, William IV personally entreated Richmond, as the most acceptable of all, not to desert him.

Altogether Richmond's colleagues seem to have considered him decidedly an asset. In the actual debates on the Reform Bill he had very little to say and that little consisted mostly of his usual salty or sarcastic paragraphs. At the time of the dissolution of Parliament in April 1831 the excitement of the occasion led him to participate factiously in the unedifying squabble which preceded the appearance of the King in the House of Lords, but this celebrated incident redounded to no one's credit. On the whole it seems to have been chiefly for his candour and staunchness of spirit that he was esteemed. To the mystified Greville, who could not recover from his astonishment at seeing his ignorant and narrow-minded friend in the ministry, Lord Melbourne explained that "he was sharp, quick, the King liked him, and he stood up to Durham more than any other man in the Cabinet, and that altogether he was not unimportant." Brougham did not hesitate to describe him (in somewhat slipshod grammar) as "an admirable colleague. Full of courage, clear-headed, very good-humoured, very quick, very candid—uneducated except as a soldier; and who would with education have done considerable, perhaps great things." Lord Grey likewise had a good opinion of him, which he demonstrated by





entrusting him with the delicate task of securing an apology from Henry Drummond, who had described Grey in a *Times* article as a "profligate politician".

Somehow, indeed, Richmond's middle position seems to have caused observers to think more than once in times of crisis that Richmond might be called to the position of Prime Minister. One of H.B.'s political sketches in June 1832, under the caption, "A group of sporting characters at Epsom" shows a group of prominent personages discussing who is to be the next head of the government; Richmond, standing near by, is made to say fatuously, "I believe they are speaking of me." Again two years later when the Grey government broke up, Lord Wharncliffe considered it not unlikely that the King might send for Richmond, whose chief difficulty in that case would be the unwillingness for personal reasons of the Duke of Wellington's friends to serve with him.

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Of these speculations, which are only the various possible combinations which every politician, like every chess player, must envisage, nothing, of course, ever came, fortunately for the Duke himself, who would have cut a miserable figure. Not, however, that he altogether wanted the capacity to command. As Postmaster-General, a post which he held the best

part of four years, he had charge of a department of the government notoriously maintained as a source of rich patronage and taxation, rather than as a public service, magnificently inefficient, and filled with vested rights which could not be interfered with without violation of the very keen sense of property which Richmond, in common with all country gentlemen of the day, cherished. The rates of postage were, in to-day's view, outrageous ; in London there were actually two systems, a penny post for local letters and a General Post Office for the kingdom at large.

The Duke of Richmond, although not then prepared for any sweeping postal reform, sensed in a vague way this tangled jungle growth. With the workings of the department he took the trouble to acquaint himself, and unlike his predecessors did not leave all discretion in the hands of the Permanent Secretary, Sir Francis Freeling, a well-intentioned and industrious, but hide-bound official of the old school. One or two improvements were made, retiring London post office servants being given country positions to save pensions, the English and Irish departments being consolidated, and French newspapers being admitted free of duty by mutual arrangement with the French government. Very little else was done, but when he had retired from office the duke did not hesitate to defend his administration with considerable

spirit, saying "he believed that there was not a department under the Government in which more zeal was displayed." How it was displayed he neglected to explain. A few years later the question of thorough reform came to a crisis. What he himself could not do, nor, indeed, fully realize the necessity for, he now generously applauded in others. Henry Cole, lobbying for Rowland Hill's uniform penny postage plan in 1839, found him quite friendly to the measure and even ready to "quiz the Lords out of franking, by allowing them fifteen pence a day instead".

Long before this time Richmond had resigned from office. As the religious question had caused his break with the Tories in 1829, so again in 1834 it brought his severance of connection with the Whig-Liberal government. The traditional prejudices of his family were altogether too strong for him to consent to any concession to the Roman Catholics, such as was contemplated in the government scheme for appropriating a part of the income of the Irish Church to the purposes of education. A little dissenting group had, in fact, grown up within the government on this subject, under the leadership of Edward Stanley, the later Lord Stanley and Earl of Derby.

The disruption came really as a culmination of Grey's shrewd folly in forming a Cabinet of men unsuited to each other by political



antecedents, principles, and sentiments. Greville himself, almost a year earlier, wrote in his journal how necessary it was to resolve the jangling; and not least important, he thought, was it to get rid of Richmond himself, whom he considered "utterly incapable, entirely ignorant", and exasperating to many people of importance by "his pert smartness, saying sharp things, cheering offensively". But in this he seems to have suspected that he was a little mistaken, as he recorded :

"It is remarkable certainly that his colleagues appear to entertain a higher opinion of him than he deserves, and you hear of one or another saying, 'Oh, you don't know the Duke of Richmond.' He has, in fact, that weight which a man can derive from being positive, obstinate, pertinacious, and busy, but his understanding lies in a nutshell, and his information in a pin's head. He is, however, good-humoured, a good fellow and personally liked, particularly by Stanley and Graham, who are of his own age, and have the same taste for sporting and gay occupation."

Having, therefore, the esteem of his colleagues, Richmond left office without at the same time taking leave of his friends' good opinions. He seems almost to have viewed himself in the rôle of peacemaker. It was while the Duke was away in Paris that Lord John Russell in the House of Commons announced his support of the appropriations scheme which "upset the coach". "Pighead Richmond", as Creevey called him, came back to find that Stanley and Graham,

his friends, had resigned, and, feeling that if he had been on the ground he might have composed the difficulty, he was nevertheless under the circumstances obliged to follow their example. But while Stanley showed a bitter spirit, the Duke of Richmond retained the friendship of Lord Grey, and from that time he took up the position of an amicable, and by no means negligible, adviser to the Liberal ministry until the Melbourne Cabinet went out of office in 1841.

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It was, on the whole, as well that he served no longer in high public office. His interests never strayed far from those of the ordinary country gentleman and the social obligations which such a position in society involved. As a landlord over large estates, a magistrate called upon daily while in his own county to adjudicate in matters of the local business of Western Sussex, as a paternal figure upon whom depended the welfare of many humble people, farmers, and agricultural labourers, he was conscious always of heavy social responsibilities. The Poor Laws, the prisons, the condition of agriculture, became his absorbing interests, beside which the position of Postmaster-General or a seat in the Cabinet seemed of slight consequence.

And he had good reason to be aware of the poor, for Sussex was one of the most disturbed counties during the rick-burnings, threats, and

riots of Swing and Hodge in 1830. In November of that year Richmond, with a force of fifty of his own tenant farmers, encountered a band of two hundred desperate labourers in battle and defeated them, making a speech to them afterwards, and sending them away in good humour. He was as vigilant later in bringing about, through the assistance of a Bow Street runner, the capture of an agitator named Evans, in whose pocket was found a chemical formula for incendiary materials.

But he was not fool enough to suppose that his popularity with the labourers nor vigilance in looking out for agitators would suffice to cure rural distress. From the moment when he was first roused to political activity he showed a desire that some action should be taken by the government. That he did not know what should be done, is perhaps a measure of his incapacity ; that no one else had any really adequate remedy to suggest is a measure of the difficulty of the subject. With hesitation Richmond accepted the idea of emigration, proposals for enabling the overseers of the poor to place land at the disposal of labourers, and other palliatives. The harsh Poor Law Bill of 1834, with its proposal to abolish all poor relief outside the workhouse, he opposed strenuously in the Cabinet conferences, saying that it would mean virtually life imprisonment, and that any attempt to enforce it would cause a rebellion.

Once the Cabinet adopted this measure, however, he accepted its principle that the labourer must be restored to a position "in which he trusted to his honest exertions and industry, and did not apply on every occasion for parish relief." He could not, in fact, refuse to recognize the appalling situation which had arisen, when poor rates soared to heights ruinous for property owners without any very apparent advantage to the poor. At the same time he foresaw the need for sympathetic and cautious administration of such a drastic law.

"He could not avoid, . . . looking at the Bill with considerable alarm, and he thought, that some of the powers given by it were to be viewed with much jealousy and suspicion. He trusted that regulations would be introduced to control the powers given to the Commissioners, or that, at all events, the Secretary of State for the Home Department would watch the exercise of those powers with a jealous eye. . . . If an effort should be made to introduce the system all at once, and per force on the country, the worst effects might be produced."

In anticipating an outcry he certainly had events on his side, but it was a prophecy in which he would, no doubt, rather have been wrong. Ironically enough Richmond himself became the object of the criticism which he feared the Bill would arouse. For, having the sincerity of his convictions, he permitted himself to be made chairman of the Westhampnett Poor Law Union in order to see for himself to the execution of the

measure. William Cobbett, the battle-scarred tribune of the people, who had become a Member of the reformed House of Commons, fell foul of the Duke in his denunciation of the "cursed" Poor Law. He assailed savagely the expenditure of £2,000 on the improvement of the Westhampnett workhouse, and suggested, with pure malice, the inconsistency of a duke taking such pains to put down bastardy when he himself was sprung from the unhallowed relations of the Merry Monarch with Madame Querouaille.

Not satisfied with thus making a spectacle of himself, the farmer demagogue, who had so much of good to his credit, disgraced his own deathbed by writing for the *Political Register* in the last article from his pen, a further totally unreasonable reasoned justification of what he had said, railing at the "Leviathan-Pensioner" and the "peer-chairman", who ruled and dominated the Westhampnett Union through a Board of Guardians composed almost entirely of his own and his brother's tenants. And what annoyed him most of all was that these Lennoxes, "this endless swarm of everlasting pensioners", should be sucking up the life-blood of the country in consequence of favours wantonly bestowed by Charles II. "Now, mark," he wrote, "less than one half of the interest of the money which this family of Lennox have drawn out of the industry and sweat of the people of England, by means of one pension, would *pay the whole of*

*the Poor-rates of the county of Sussex for ever ! ”* Yet the Union was selling off the brewing utensils and the utensils for pickling meat which had belonged to the old poorhouses, and condemning the inmates at Westhampnett to a diet of water, potatoes, and oatmeal. And he printed the dietary, which, though not meatless, certainly does not look very appetizing.

In all these charges there was, no doubt, more than a little truth, mixed with more than a little exaggeration, bluster, and offensiveness of statement. For if the fifth Duke of Richmond, in consequence of his position in life, exercised considerable influence in his part of Sussex, that was something which he could hardly avoid. He exerted no pressure and there is not a scrap of evidence that anything was done which the Board of Guardians objected to, tacitly or otherwise. In receiving Cobbett's abuse the Duke was simply the victim of his own conscientiousness.

It was this which had led him to accept the chairmanship of the Board of Guardians when the Westhampnett Union was formed. In doing so he committed an indiscretion, no doubt, as he exposed himself to being considered responsible personally for the success or failure of the new Poor Law, but, having declared in the House of Lords his concern at the possible harsh execution of the measure, he felt he could not do less than to temper the wind. The new Union,

consisting of thirty-seven parishes, which contained a total population of more than 15,000, came into existence in March 1835. At the start there were four workhouses, but these were soon reduced to two and finally at the end of a year to one. This one, a former manor house centrally located at Westhampnett, happened to belong to the Duke, who leased it to the Union at the very moderate rental of fifty pounds a year.

Inevitably in a region where a large proportion of the land belonged to the Duke of Richmond, a number of the Guardians were chosen from among his tenants and relatives, perhaps a third or a fourth of them, and likewise inevitably the Duke had great influence with the Board. His solicitor and agent served as Clerk of the Union ; his steward was a Guardian ; the vice-chairman was a tenant and personal friend of Richmond. But the most hostile witness who testified in 1837 before the Select Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act could not describe the Duke's influence as " undue in any way ".

Almost from the beginning there was trouble. The first governor at Westhampnett, a farmer named Lambert, seems to have shown not the slightest capacity for his position when confronted by a raging epidemic of fever, possibly not unconnected with the sanitary arrangements of the building ; and sixteen persons, mostly children, were swept out of their miserable world

in 1836. The hysterical mother of two of the children, Mrs. Charlotte Legg, subsequently charged that Richmond had spoken to her in harsh, unsympathetic fashion and would not let her leave to secure a cart in which to carry away her dead baby. But the investigation which a Committee of the House of Commons subsequently conducted, clearly showed that Mrs. Legg had a more than lively imagination and that harshness was entirely foreign to the Duke's conduct toward the paupers. For Richmond took his position very seriously. Whenever he was at Goodwood he made it a point to visit the workhouse two or three times a week without fail, always speaking kindly to the paupers, questioning them about their wants and treatment, and even visiting the sick ward at a time when other Guardians refused to risk contagion. He had been used to these epidemics, he said, when he was in the army, and did not fear them. No doubt it was Richmond himself who was largely responsible for replacing the inefficient governor by persons more suited for the position, reforming the sanitation, and finally winning over the paupers to accept the situation for the best.

After the manner of country gentlemen, he organized entertainments for them in the park on festive occasions, and spoke to them afterwards in his affable, paternal manner, not forgetting to season his bonhomie with humorous



remarks about their games. By such cajolery were the unfortunates induced to accept the cruel regime of the poor house bastille, and even to consume the nauseous workhouse gruel of flour and water. Once the flour had been baked the gruel, which was popularly called skillygolee, became acceptable, and the duke named one of his race horses after it. For a long time this horse, while yet un-named, had failed repeatedly in its races, but suddenly in 1837 it turned into a goer. "Call it Skillygolee," said the duke, "like the workhouse soup; it was a long time before I could get it to go, but I have brought them both in winners at last."

No doubt as a great landowner the Duke of Richmond had a great pecuniary interest in keeping the poor rates as low as possible, and consequently in seeing the Poor Law of 1834 succeed. But within the limits of his understanding he was the last person to permit such considerations to sway him. The crushing burden on his tenants was more likely to carry weight with him. And the manifold considerations of public morality he knew from an intimate attention to his duties as a magistrate. For he was a regular attendant on the bench in Chichester and both in Sussex and in London showed the deepest interest in the condition of the law. He had not liked the new Poor Law when he first saw it, but when it was adopted he strove to see it properly enforced. He told

the labourers in Sussex "that it was the law of the land, and they must obey it". He came, indeed, to the conclusion that the poor were better off in the workhouse than they were at home and that the general morality had been improved. Though he spoke in the House of Lords in 1844 in support of some amelioration of the law's severity, he fully endorsed its principle. As for the abuse to which he had exposed himself in accepting the chairmanship of the Board of Guardians he defended himself heartily and let it go at that.

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In the days when Richmond first entered Parliament not the least cause of rural crime was the condition of the Game Laws. Maintained on the basis of privilege for the landed classes they not only restricted sport to the few but in order to destroy the poacher's market, prohibited the purchase and sale of game. But the rise of high preservation made poaching easy, and the growth of towns built up a great demand for game as food, with the consequence that the whole game system fell to pieces. Richmond was ready to recognize this and supported Lord Wharncliffe's efforts to secure reform. While in office he conducted the Game Law Reform Bill through the Lords and so assisted materially in abolishing the privilege system and the prohibition on the game traffic. It was on this

account that one of H.B.'s political sketches, "The Game Stall", showed Lord Wharncliffe and the Duke of Richmond selling game and crying their wares. Lord Westmoreland, looking on, is saying to the Duke of Wellington, "These are the New Game Huxters,—See how the fellows grin at us.—Isn't it melancholy?" To which the Duke of Wellington replies, "I hope they don't mean to make GAME of us."

Even with these changes the Game Laws continued to fill the gaols with hundreds of fine men and boys, whom the prison system of those days frequently turned into confirmed criminals. The fate of the convict population roused a deep interest in Richmond. He saw clearly that a system which reformed no one, which made a man inevitably worse when he came out of prison than when he entered it, which, instead of doing away with crime, rather provided a school for it,—such a system required some sort of alteration. Many other intelligent people have felt the same necessity, and if a century of investigation, experiment, and thought have still not disposed of the problem, so all the more does the Duke of Richmond deserve credit for his courage, or at least intrepidity, in attacking it.

Being out of office in 1835 he turned seriously to this subject, and on March 24th moved for a Select Committee on prison discipline. He considered that the time had come for some kind of action ; the gaols followed no uniform system,

punishments varied in severity from one institution to another, everywhere they depraved their inmates ; in short, " the matter could not be worse than at present ". And the very latest information had just been brought back from America by Commissioners sent to investigate the merits of the new prison systems overseas. With no very good grace the Government granted the Committee, and Richmond threw himself heartily into the work. A large number of the most qualified persons were examined, not excluding Elizabeth Fry and other ladies who were accustomed to visit prisons, the Duke sat in the chair almost every day, and apparently it was he who asked most of the questions.

In consequence of the Committee's work steps were taken to maintain a more uniform system of prison discipline, and inspectors were appointed to keep watch over its management. Perhaps more significant of the times was the recommendation in the first report, which bears all the marks of Richmond's own handiwork, of the Silent-Solitary System, which was then gaining the popular favour from its supposed success in America in the two forms of the Auburn system and the Pennsylvania system. As the prisoners had previously been merely detained in the mass and allowed to associate as they pleased, it was pretty certain that any regime which separated them, classified them, and disciplined them would be an improvement.

Accordingly Richmond announced his conversion to the silent system, though accepting the principle of solitude only "to such an extent as might be necessary for preventing contamination" of boys and other first offenders by the corruption of hardened criminals. Experiments were made with the silent system in Sussex and he came to the conclusion that it had proved highly successful. Prisoners, he declared, instead of being degraded, were improved, of which proof was to be found in the willingness of farmers to hire them when they had served their terms. At last in 1842 the Government decided to try the device with prisoners sentenced to transportation by giving them the compulsory privilege of eighteen months' solitary confinement in order to reclaim them as much as possible before sending them to Van Diemen's Land. The experiment was to be conducted under the supervision of Commissioners of high station and rank and carefully watched.

Richmond, who became one of the Commissioners, was at first rather sceptical of the advisability of "a perfect and entire separation of prisoners", but he applied himself as conscientiously to his new duties as he had in the case of the Westhampnett Union. Pentonville Prison, where the 500 beneficiaries of this cruel test were entombed, never to see anyone for a year and a half except warders, noble Commissioners, and pious chaplains, became almost the haunt of the

Duke. Visiting and conversing with the prisoners, learning how he might help their families in distress, he often spent the whole of a long day in the prison. In the end, despite the lunacy and suicide resulting in some cases from the horrors of solitude, he came to look upon the experiment as in some measure a success. But he clearly saw that eighteen months was much too long a period of solitary confinement.

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The Westhampnett Union and Pentonville Prison were far from making the Duke of Richmond a Shaftesbury. He lacked the religious fervour, the fanatical singleness of purpose, and the perseverance necessary, at least in those days, for a social reformer. He was, moreover, a duke, on whom in consequence of his station in life many and varied demands were made which a conscientious man could not resist. Prison reform had four or five years of his close attention, but he could give it no more. And, after all, he was essentially a farmer, a country man, never so at home in London as on his own estates in Sussex. Farm talk came easily to him. As much of his property was grazing land, he took a deep interest in stock breeding, and had the greatest pride in his large flock of South Down sheep, which he loved to show to his guests at Goodwood. Following the tradition of Bakewell and of the third Duke of Richmond before him,

he devoted large sums to improving the breed, receiving his reward in numerous medals awarded in cattle shows at Smithfield and in Sussex. His sheep were eagerly sought by Continental and American breeders. Even the noble deer in Halnaker Park were disposed of to make way for the prosaic little hornless animals which had defeated them in the contest for man's favour.

Not the least duty of the country gentleman was that of setting an example for his tenants and encouraging them to make the best use of their land. If the sheep cult served no other purpose it did this. Stock raising was in a measure ennobled by the prominent part which the Duke took in the activities of the Smithfield Cattle Club and in the founding of the Royal Agricultural Society, of which in 1845 he became President.

Towards his tenants, then, Richmond's policy seems to have been that of the generous and understanding landlord and adviser. Cobbett himself, long before he had conceived his bitter attack of 1835, was charmed as he travelled through the Sussex estates in 1823 and found the extensive Richmond territory, consisting of the contiguous estates of Goodwood, Halnaker, and Westhampnett, mainly high downland, but partly arable, a garden of beauty. Everybody, Cobbett noted, spoke well of the Duke.

"There is, besides," he observed, "*no misery* to be seen here. I have seen no wretchedness in Sussex; nothing to be at all compared to that which I have seen in other

parts ; and as to these villages in the South Downs, they are beautiful . . . . There is an appearance of comfort about the dwellings of the labourers, all along here, that is very pleasant to behold. The gardens are neat, and full of vegetables of the best kinds. I see very few of 'Ireland's lazy root' ; . . . I saw, and with great delight, a pig at almost every labourer's house."

The same enlightened policy—which was, after all, only a far seeing self-interest—Richmond exhibited when he inherited the Scotch lands of the Duke of Gordon. He at once set about improving the estate ; plantations were laid out, fences begun, drainage provided, cottages constructed, and every encouragement given to bring the land into the highest state of cultivation. In 1846, upon the adoption of the principle of free trade, against which he fought so ardently, he told his Scottish tenants that any who had signed leases under the impression that the Corn Law of 1842 was to be permanent might, if they so wished, give up their farms and receive compensation for any unexhausted improvements.

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Naturally Goodwood remained the centre around which all his life revolved. That magnificent estate, situated on the rolling downs, centred in the park and house of Goodwood ; there, in the midst of an enclosure of twelve hundred acres, on the side of one of the highest downs was located the mansion begun on an original plan by the third Duke. Constructed



of square flints from the chalk downs, with a front colonnade of Portland Stone, Doric and Ionic pillars, and towers, it was complete except for the east wing when the fifth Duke took charge. He furnished it room by room, one room a year, and finally in 1838 began the construction of the new wing. On February 27th, 1839, the day on which his son, the new Earl of March, reached his majority, it was opened in celebration of the occasion as part of a truly ducal festival. From the stag hunt in the morning to the bonfire on St. Roche's hill and the great ball and supper for nearly seven hundred of the nobility and gentry of the county at night, and on in the following days to the dinner for the tenantry and the feast for the poor of the Westhampnett workhouse all was a lordly, lavish, and bountiful magnificence.

Here in the midst of his pictures, his Rubens, Van Dykes, Titians, Teniers, Rembrandts, Hogarths, Reynolds, Gainsboroughs, and more recently his Lawrences, in the midst of his numerous family, the Duke made an ideal host. Creevey has left a delicious little glimpse of his visit in 1828.

"The house at Goodwood is perfection. It is an immense concern, and every part of it is gaiety itself. . . . Turning out of the hall on our right into the principal drawing-room, 60 feet long at least I should say, with a circular room open at the end—both rooms furnished with the brightest yellow satin . . . here we found the ladies and various men . . . . There were four sisters of the Duchess, . . . and four plainer young

women one can't well see. The Duchess, tho' in my mind not nearly so pretty as the Seftons think [it is only fair to remember the horrible pallor lent by the yellow room] is greatly superior to her sisters, with a most agreeable and intelligent countenance . . . . She has now eight children, and lives all the year in the country . . . ."

Greville, too, was always charmed with Goodwood, where he visited not infrequently on account of the races. Tortured by the gout, which detained him there in 1831 after the racing crowd had departed, he could not help giving vent, even on the rack of pain, to his delight.

"I never come here", he wrote, "without fresh admiration of the beauty and delightfulness of the place, combining everything that is enjoyable in life—large and comfortable house, spacious and beautiful park, extensive views, dry soil, sea air, woods, and rides over downs, and all the facilities of occupation and amusement. The Duke, who has so strangely become a Cabinet Minister in a Whig Government, and who is a very good sort of man and my excellent friend, appears here to advantage, exercising a magnificent hospitality, and living as a sportsman, a farmer, a magistrate, and good, simple, unaffected country gentleman, with great personal influence. This is what he is fit for, to be

With safer pride content,

The wisest justice on the banks of Trent,  
and not to assist in settling Europe and making new constitutions."

Like Greville, most of the guests came for the sport, for the Duke of Richmond and the Goodwood racecourse loomed large in the world of the Turf. In his younger days he had displayed a catholic interest in sport, playing enthusiastically

at cricket and riding to hounds, but "the ball of Orthez", which, as a relative once pointed out, "the most expert member of Lord's would have found it impossible to stop", doomed hunting days; a bad fall on a steep hill near Goodwood after his return from the wars was thought to have shifted the bullet in his chest and he was advised to give up the sport. Shooting he did not fail to practise in the season, though not in the fashion of the slaughterers and high preservers who were becoming so common. He never preserved hares and rabbits, regarding them as vermin, the sure destruction of valuable trees, which were the glory of Goodwood, and he therefore never had any difficulties from game destroying his tenants' crops. His favourite shooting pony "Peggy", successor to an earlier "Pigeon", no one might ride but him and her trainer. A shooting pony was the sure mark of the old style of sportsman.

But if he showed conservative tendencies in this respect, he accepted and abetted progress in the world of the Turf. Even if he had not believed that cardinal article of faith with the English landed classes, that racing led to the improvement of the breed of horses, a point of interest to such an agriculturist, he could hardly have ignored the obvious fact that the Goodwood downs were divinely destined for horse-racing, as the third Duke recognized when he established Goodwood races on a moderate scale in 1802.

At that time the sport, although well established, had not acquired the elaborateness and proportions which came to characterize it before the fifth Duke died; sweepstakes had not become numerous, matches were usually arranged on the spot, and gentlemen riders had by no means left the field in the possession of professional jockeys. The young Lord March himself, in defiance of the bullet in his chest, rode a gentlemen's match at Brussels just before the battle of Waterloo.

As luxury and refinement put away the ruggedness of the eighteenth century and the Turf became more and more thoroughly organized, more and more flooded with the riches signified by professional trainers and jockeys and sweepstakes, Goodwood's importance grew. It outgrew itself. The Duke, not without the encouragement of Lord George Bentinck, erected a new stand, set up a railing to form an enclosure, laid out new courses fully open to the view of the spectators, charged an admission of five shillings to defray the expense, and so transformed mere horse races into a magnificent annual spectacle. Goodwood, formerly on the level of the numerous country racing events such as Guildford and Tunbridge Wells, came to rival even Ascot, and it was prophesied freely that Doncaster would soon be the only country meeting to compete with it for public attention. Sporting writers went into ecstasies over it as "the most beautiful

place on earth". "Gloomy Goodwood" became "Glorious Goodwood".

But there were two drawbacks. Often the heavy sea mist, wet with a peculiarly all-pervading wetness, drifted over the downs and damped down every pleasure in the events of the day. About this, of course, nothing could be done. The other defect of Goodwood gave the meetings one of their most notable characteristics. Accommodation for the general public in the vicinity was wretched, for Chichester, four miles away, housed but a few and the villages nearby, Singleton, Charlton, East Lavant, Midhurst, a scant few more. The Duke of Richmond, therefore, throwing open his immense house, a mile from the course, was able to accommodate a large and select group of the aristocrats of the realm. It was these guests that gave Goodwood Week a great part of its splendour, beauty, and refinement.

Seconded by his family, Richmond made an excellent host, amiable, affable, not too undignified, nor yet too condescending. He came down to breakfast at a most unducal hour, in time to take an agricultural friend on a short tour of inspection before the company generally appeared. At noon an imposing procession of vehicles set off for the course, headed by a gaudy, close carriage and four, managed by postilions and footmen screaming with red and white livery turned down and turned up with

silver and yellow. Nothing could contaminate this extremely select party. A portion of the grandstand, supplied with exclusive luncheon tables, was set aside for it. The saddle horses in the day time, the *artiste* playing waltzes in the evening, the whist, the billiards,—the occasion was complete in every way, even to the practical jokes to which Lord William Pitt Lennox, by the bitter right of a younger son, was prone. And so the Chesterfields, the Angleseys, the Dukes of Cambridge, Bedford, and Derby, the Straffords, the Peels, the Paynes, and even royalty, English and foreign, departed at the end of a lively week voting the Duke of Richmond the most gracious and perfect of hosts, a veritable Prince of the Turf.

Such a position gave him no slight importance among the rulers of the realm, and no doubt goes far to explain his consequence as a political makeweight. Like Samuel Wilberforce in the Church, the Duke of Wellington in the State, the Duke of Richmond was one of the greatest dignitaries in the world of Sport; and these three institutions were the essence of the English aristocratic system. Naturally at George IV's dinners to the Jockey Club Richmond sat next him. When William IV showed a want of interest in one of the established pillars of the realm by refusing to maintain the royal stud, it was the Duke of Richmond, largely, who induced him to continue at least a part of his

patronage of the Turf. And who more proper than the proprietor of Goodwood to decorate with the royal family the spectacle of Ascot ?

Certainly it was not as a winner of races that the Duke loomed so prominently, nor as a breeder, nor yet as a gambler. He was no Lord Glasgow, no Bentinck, no Stanley ; but gradually from Roncesvalles and Gas, which ran at Goodwood in 1818, his string of horses was increased to a very respectable number. An extraordinary run of success in 1827, when Gulnare won the Oaks and with six other horses achieved twenty-three victories, encouraged him to expand somewhat, but he did not allow the heady wine to upset his moderation, and contented himself for the most part with opening his stables to the horses of his friends, the Earl of Stradbroke, Colonel Peel, the Byngs and others,—and later Lord George Bentinck—who thought they saw on the springy downs the ideal place for training race-horses.

Such a man would not, of course, plunge into the maelstrom of betting, there to be drawn down to destruction, clutching at the straws of “ sure things ”, information direct from the stable, and one last wager to recover everything. He would never come to the fate of Craven, who shot himself because he had lost heavily and could not pay his debts. For there was a touch of the Puritan in Richmond, a consciousness of responsibility for the welfare of many people, great and small, which forbade any reckless ventures,

and so while he moved among the world where books were made habitually on the Derby and all other important races, where thousands of pounds changed hands every settling day at Tattersall's, where the odds were meat and drink to the zealots, he himself would take a wager at five or ten pounds and let it go at that. He considered himself not a betting man.

His position in the sporting world made Richmond peculiarly suitable for sponsoring legislation connected with its affairs. When disaffected persons in 1840 raked up a forgotten statute prohibiting the running of horses under other than the owner's name, Richmond secured the passage of a measure repealing the old law. Similarly he fathered in the House of Lords the measures to put an end to the *qui tam* actions of 1844 for excessive betting. It was a subject in which he took a deep interest, not the less because some of his closest friends were the victims, and as chairman of the Select Committee on the matter he displayed enough zeal to expose himself to some criticism.

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But at this time events were impending which brought him suddenly back into active politics. After leaving the ministry in 1834 as a member of the Derby Dilly, as Daniel O'Connell jocosely called the carriage-full of Stanleyites, Richmond had occupied a not



uncomfortable position on the sidelines almost like that of an umpire. He was seen in 1835 in most amicable discourse with Lord John Russell. "It was amusing," wrote Thomas Moore, "to see the Duke of Richmond with Lord John, whom he had not met for some time, and whom he patted on the back and played with like a school-boy, quizzing him good-humouredly upon some of the points on which they now differ in politics. It softens one's view of the public drama to see such goings on behind the scenes."<sup>1</sup> The Duke accepted the Conservatives while they were in office, and the Liberals when their turn came, but showed little inclination to accept any cares for himself. Indeed Greville much doubted whether he might any longer be considered even a Stanleyite. The same friendly attitude continued when Peel's second ministry began in 1841, but though Lord Stanley then entered office, Richmond refused on the grounds of health on being asked to fill the place of the Duke of Buckingham.

Already at that time the veil of the future was being rolled back to reveal the imminence of Free Trade. It was only natural for agriculturists, and especially so zealous a one as the Duke of Richmond, to feel the necessity of protection; and traditional English paternalism, applied in the form of the Corn Law of 1815, had

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Moore : *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore* (Lord John Russell, ed., London, 1856), VII, 80-1.

converted the policy into a cardinal article of faith. It was therefore an inexpressibly vile thing which came into existence when the Anti-Corn Law League was formed ; any other reform was acceptable, parliamentary, corporation, slavery, but never Free Trade. The Duke recoiled from it at the start, as from something unclean, heretical, and absurd. The manufacturing interest, he pointed out in 1839, depended on the market supplied by the agricultural ; if therefore the farmers were ruined by Corn Law repeal, the evil would only rebound upon its authors, the mill owners. He “ denied, that the Corn Tax was a landlord’s tax”, and threatened that if anything so inconceivable as its repeal were decided upon he would prefer to transfer his capital to another country.

It may have been some uncertainty about the course of the Peel government that led Richmond to refuse to take office with it in 1842. Even before the Liberals were fairly out he warned their successors that the very forces which had put them in power would thrust them out if they meddled with Protection. But in this he was only whistling to keep up his courage, for when the reductions were made in the sliding scale in 1842, with Lord John Russell’s small fixed duty as the only alternative, he acquiesced, congratulating himself, no doubt, that he had kept himself free of responsibility. As consolation he clung to the straw of finality, and trusted the

Ministry's assurance that nothing further would be necessary.

As the giant of the League grew and grew into a "great fact" he began to fear again. Fear drove him into greater activity. In the organization of Protection Societies to meet the threat of the League's campaign in the rural districts he took a prominent part. He became president of the National Society for the Protection of Agriculture. By way of diverting attention to the needs of agriculture rather than its capacity to withstand foreign competition he moved for a Bill to enable possessors of entailed estates to mortgage them for drainage and other improvements, urged a measure for allotment gardens to be put at the disposal of labourers, and pressed for relief from the burdens of agricultural taxation.

It is well agreed that Sir Robert Peel required great courage in deciding at last to repeal the Corn Law, and not the less so as he knew that he would surely meet the decided opposition of the Duke of Richmond, the boldest and most fearless of the Lords. Brief as the Duke's speeches usually were, they derived something from his flashing eye and plain but forceful language which convinced his hearers of the integrity, vitality, and consequence of his opinions. In personal appearance he was not, perhaps, as imposing as a duke ought to be. His height fell just short of what might be described as tall; his figure, though graceful, was somewhat slight; his dress, though correct,

seemed careless ; and even his gait had something of the informal in it. But he was, nevertheless, conscious of his position, and when he rose to speak his handsome face, set off by dark hair and eyes, commanded instant attention. What he said did not come as from a Demosthenes. Starting up suddenly from his seat and speaking in a loud, almost harsh voice, without gesticulation of any kind, he vollied forth a rush of terse, uncompromising, unadorned sentences which sounded all too frequently like the violence of ungovernable passion. There was never by any chance the relief which might have been supplied by humour, despite an occasional somewhat heavy sarcasm—the brevity of the remarks made wit unnecessary—but when the Duke sat down it was usually found that he had effectively brushed away the cobwebs. About his views there could be no doubt.

When the awful secret of Peel's decision to repeal became known, Richmond was as furious, in a House of Lords way, as Lord George Bentinck was in the House of Commons. He forced his brother, Lord Arthur Lennox, a member of the Government, to resign his seat at Chichester, replacing him by Lord Henry Lennox, his own son, charged the Prime Minister with "cowardly political fear" because he would not appeal to the country, and on the second reading of the Corn Bill implored the Lords to throw it out, lest it prove the beginning of momentous and

disastrous changes to come. For had not John Bright openly declared that the object of the Anti-Corn Law League was to crush the aristocracy? In this awful moment the angry bumptiousness so characteristic of the Duke, left him and he spoke in a solemn, earnest, even beseeching tone. After that there was nothing left to do but to cry out loudly "Not content" when the repeal passed on June 25th, and to spread protests upon the records.

To Richmond the defeat represented nothing but a sordid victory for a vulgar system of agitation. At a meeting of the Protection societies he had opened his address by saying: "Gentlemen, I am one of those who think that we ought not to teach the people of this country the fatal lesson that to be quiet and unobtrusive is to be defenceless, and that systems which have been tested by the experience of ages are to be overthrown by combination, and by clamour." And yet exactly that had happened. He himself, largely in consequence of his own downrightness, became the butt and target of the free traders. "I think there be six Richmonds in the field," cries the wild-eyed figure in *Punch's* caricature, holding aloft a banner inscribed, "Down with the League" and surrounded by braying asses crowned with ducal coronets. But for all his frenzy, in the end (to take the conceit of another cartoon) Richmond with a woefully sour expression was obliged to swallow his "black draught"

of Free Trade, which Cobden was tossing off with great relish as a choice wine.

In still another caricature Peel, as a bobby, is hustling the dukes out of the way of progress: "Now then, Old Boys! you mustn't stand in people's way! You must move on!" It was exactly this that Richmond refused to do. That others had adapted themselves to the circumstances of the day argued nothing with him. The old obstinacy suggested by Lady Sarah Napier in the far-off days of the Peninsular War, abided with him still. At first his bitterness had all the exquisite throbbing of a new wound. "At Goodwood," wrote Greville in August, "Lord Stanley was laid up with the gout; the Duke of Richmond was as violent and talkative as usual, and incessantly clamouring against Peel, the renegades, and the Bill, and arranging 'Cabinets' to be held in Stanley's bedroom, with his Protectionist friends—George Bentinck, Beaufort, Stradbroke, and Eglinton, Stanley's new friends!"

In the ensuing years the issue of Protection continued to possess his mind, for he could not conceive of its becoming the dead question which it remained for nearly half a century. He had not, he declared, "in the slightest degree withdrawn from the cause of Protection", and he urged the application of every constitutional pressure to retrieve the false step which had been taken. Being convinced that Free Trade could only involve disaster, he saw ruin on all sides.

The farmers were crushed between the millstones of high taxes and low prices. To this had the "Anti-Corn Law League mania" brought them. People declared that a return to Protection was a visionary hope, but he countered by observing that it had been just as incredible that Peel would turn in his tracks and adopt the Manchester views.

While Disraeli meanwhile was trimming his sails and marking out a course close to the wind preparatory to putting over the helm hard a-port and sailing off in a Peelish direction, while other opportunists were bethinking themselves that it was time to jettison the Jonah of Protection, while the wild, uncharted waste of opposition was turning their thoughts to the cosy harbour of office, only the Duke of Richmond was nursing the bitter memory of his debt to principle and holding aloft the torch of Lord George Bentinck. The speech from the throne in 1850 fired him almost for the last time when it expressed a regret merely at the cries of agriculture in distress, and not at the distress itself. "This was neither more nor less than 'a slap in the face' for the owners and occupiers of land for making complaints. . . . The truth of the case is, my Lords, that I consider this clause as an insult to the agricultural interest."

And then the inexorable march of time put an end to an opposition which was beginning to seem rather quixotic. Disraeli had now set up

in discreet biographical form his tombstone to the "English worthy", Lord George Bentinck, and the Protectionists decided at the beginning of 1852 that they would at least make no frontal attack on Free Trade. In form at least, the Duke agreed. It was the beginning of the end. When the Derby ministry came into office, Richmond, because he felt his incapacity, or perhaps secretly because of his distrust, refused a place in it. And at last Disraeli announced the benediction on Protection. "I can see they are, damn them ! at the old game of throwing over their principles," was the Duke's comment. Even so, they were still ready in 1858 to offer him the War Office, though he refused to accept it.

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Before that, age and disease had begun to close down on him. The Crimean War reminded him that he was, after all, a soldier, and although he was much too far advanced in life to have the privilege of shrapnel, dysentery, and frostbite in this another peninsular contest, or gangrene in Scutari, he threw himself heartily into whatever military activity was available at home. Already in the forties he had harassed the government into granting medals to the veterans of the Spanish and other wars, much to the disgust of Wellington and others whose inexplicable neglect had left the heroes of Spain—or many of them—in obscurity while showering Waterloo medals on



soldiers some of whom were unaware of the defeat of Napoleon until several days after it had occurred. The Earl of Londonderry sarcastically urged that the medals ought to have the word "Richmond" engraved at the bottom. Somehow one senses that it was the military career, closed to him by a weak constitution, a wound, peace, and the stern call of duty at home, that he would have wished to devote himself to, heart and soul. No one in the Sussex militia came more eagerly to its exercises, entered more enthusiastically into its camp life, exhibited a more hearty camaraderie to his fellow officers, than the Duke of Richmond, as its Colonel. And so the Crimean War revived his drooping spirit. He spoke frequently in the House of Lords. He lived over again the Peninsular days.

After that there was nothing. He lingered until 1860, when he was at last harvested by the grim reaper who takes noblemen, yeomen, working men in the same swath. As is the fate of dukes he had been loaded with honours. For he was Charles Gordon-Lennox, Duke of Richmond, Earl of March, Baron of Settrington, in the British peerage, Duke of Lennox, Earl of Darnley, Baron Methuen, in the peerage of Scotland, Duke of Aubigny in the French peerage, Knight of the Garter, Colonel of the Royal Sussex militia, Lord-Lieutenant, Custos Rotulorum, and Vice-Admiral of Sussex, High Steward of Chichester, Chancellor of Marischal College,

and Hereditary Constable of Inverness Castle. And of these honours, as of those of most dukes, that might be said which the Earl of Salisbury said of the Garter, there was "no damned nonsense of merit" about them.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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*Reports from the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the Laws respecting Gaming, Parliamentary Papers, 1844, VI, nos. 468, 544, 604.*

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## CHAPTER V

### SIR JOHN BENNET LAWES

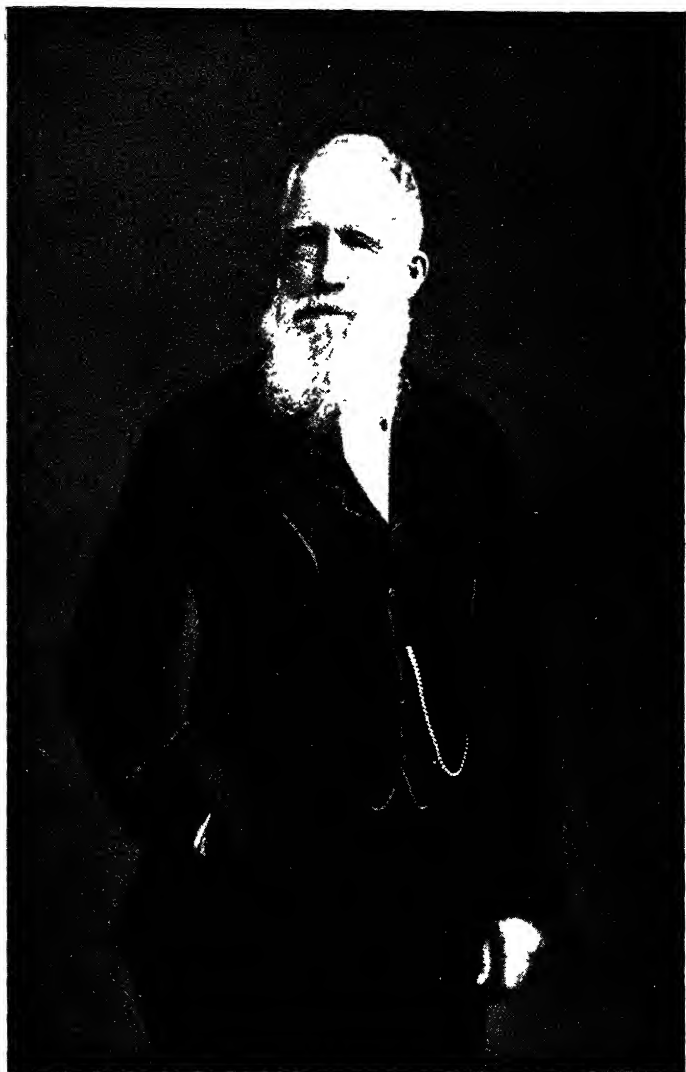
It is something of a question whether organized religion or the practice of agriculture represents more completely the force of tradition. The recorded dogmas of churches and sects possess, no doubt, a tremendous power of persistence, but contemplation of the numerous, widespread, and radical departures from established institutions shows a certain vulnerability to rather sudden changes. Agriculture, by contrast, although experiencing some considerable changes, has passed through these developments by such an extremely gradual process that it may be said to have remained unaltered in its fundamentals for many centuries at a time. The most obvious exceptions to this generalization are the Enclosure Movement and the introduction of new crops in the eighteenth, and the rise of scientific, mechanized agriculture in the nineteenth centuries, yet the more the subject is studied the more is it realized that the improvements made their way with difficulty and against the most obstinate inertia, and that ancient, almost primitive, methods long survived over large portions of the arable land of England and the world.

Doubtless very complex reasons are required to explain this agricultural lag. For one thing the growth of food depends largely upon one of the great intractable forces of Nature, the weather. To the present day, at any rate, despite elaborate attempts to control precipitation by ionization of the clouds, it has proved impossible to reform the weather. But a good part of the explanation also lies in the necessarily traditional point of view of the farmer during most of his history. Having his capital tied up in land which produced but one return a year, enjoying rarely more than a slight margin of profit and consequently unable to risk testing any new views of which he might hear, being usually completely uneducated except in the old skills of his ancestors, he did as his father had done, and his grandfather before him. As, by virtue of his rural isolation, he saw few strangers and met with few new ideas, he maintained closed views against anything foreign. A stick for a plough having served his forbears, it would serve now. A cast iron plough, as American prairie farmers once claimed, would poison the soil ; new root crops, as English farmers of the eighteenth century maintained, were foreign innovations as unwelcome as Hanoverian rats.

There were no inquiring scientists among the old agriculturists. Even the eighteenth century Tulls, Townsends, Bakewells, and Cokes were only practical men who, having become

acquainted with new methods, deep ploughing, turnips, the possibilities of stock breeding, or new crop rotations, had the courage—and the capital—to introduce them in the midst of suspicious and reluctant farmers. These innovators, whose ideas made their way with painful slowness, were by no means beings of the laboratory, of exact measurement, of statistics. There were, to be sure, a very few scientists who were beginning to look into the laws of vegetable growth by the beginning of the next century, Nicholas Théodore de Saussure, Sir Humphry Davy, and others, but they were theorists, lecturers, potted-plant experimentalists. Still, they did good work, and laid the foundations for those who came later. They accustomed inquirers to the idea that there was a connection between the farm and science. People began to talk about the chemistry of agriculture.

Ultimately these two streams, practical innovation and scientific investigation, came together in the person of Sir John Bennet Lawes, whose experimental farm, a laboratory of the fields, became the wonder of the agricultural world. Visible proof in crops, not in mere pots, was supplied that chemicals, artificially manufactured salts, could grow wheat saleable in the market for feeding Englishmen. Little wonder that a few practical visionaries began to think that mankind was emancipated forever from the soil and contemplated growing grain, if necessary,



SIR JOHN BENNET LAWES, BART., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S.

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on deal boards. Not that agriculture was transformed overnight nor that the traditional caution of farmers disappeared in a flash from the world. Not, indeed, that John Lawes achieved his discoveries in a moment of inspiration, nor that his story is the whole story of the land in his day, but, for all that, his life was a great one in the annals of the land, and his work momentous.

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Although born to the state of a country gentleman, an only son, and heir to his father's estate of Rothamsted Manor, John Bennet Lawes somehow did not seem to have in very highly developed form the instincts of his class. Perhaps it was the death of his father in 1822 when the son was only eight years old that allowed him to stray at an early age into such unorthodox paths as those of chemistry. He did comply with tradition so far as to attend Eton, one of those public schools where the public are excluded and gentlemen in the making are admitted to the privileges of composing fugitive Latin verses in the purest Ciceronian and Horatian styles. There is a glimpse of maternal determination that he should follow Eton by Oxford, and at Brasenose College he accordingly matriculated in 1833. Oxford was then still wandering in the Elysian fields of classical studies, still offering its incense on the altar dedicated to the belief—

as yet a pragmatic one—that a commercial and industrial England could be best governed by students of Virgil, Homer and Aristophanes. It had little to offer to a young man whose interests lay in another direction. John Lawes's studies at Oxford were therefore not consistently directed toward a degree. He consulted only his whims, heard the lectures of Dr. Charles Daubeny, and came away after a few months without any honours.

Dr. Daubeny was the thin edge of the wedge of science at Oxford, and a very thin wedge it was, too. Whether it was he who confirmed and fixed in Lawes's mind a predilection for chemistry is not possible to say, but it is certain that from that moment he was heart and soul a chemist, without ceasing to be a country gentleman. He left the university and entered into possession of his Hertfordshire heritage of Rothamsted in 1834, but instead of spending his days in hunting the fox and shooting hares, as a proper gentleman would have done, he at once ordered from London the complete equipment of a chemical laboratory. To the great disquiet of his mother one of the best bedrooms in the exquisite Jacobean manor house was "fitted up with stoves, retorts, and all the apparatus and reagents necessary for chemical research", and the strange odours of ammonia, chlorine, sulphuric acid, and muriatic (hydrochloric) acid began to creep through the passages where the traditional smells of the barnyard,

stable, and hunting field should have reigned supreme.

The composition of drugs fascinated him. His thoughts were crowded with the lore of the Pharmacopœia. He went to London and studied in the laboratory of Dr. Anthony Todd Thomson, Professor of Materia Medica in the University of London, who had compounded a volume of information about the strange and powerful substances in which he had become interested. To manufacture the drugs himself and extract the active principles for use in his own experiments he grew poppies, hemlock, belladonna, and other drug-producing plants at Rothamsted. His investigations took a practical turn, and acting upon a suggestion thrown out by Dr. Thomson he set up in a barn an apparatus for manufacturing calomel, that great Victorian specific, and corrosive sublimate by burning mercury in a stream of chlorine gas ; but, fortunately for the science of agriculture, the project did not prove commercially successful.

Meanwhile, although his interests centred in chemistry and he was in a fair way to become a chemist pure and simple, Lawes was also, and apparently in quite a separate compartment of his mind, a farmer. Agriculture at that time was still learning its eighteenth century lessons. Root crops with recuperative rotations were now well established, but draining only exceptional landlords provided, machinery, beyond occasional

threshing machines, was very unusual, and fertilizers except farmyard manure, marl, and bone dust, were hardly known. The Royal Agricultural Society was not organized until 1838, the first volume of its journal did not appear until two years later. A desire for improvement of the land was, however, arising, capital was seeking appropriate application, and intelligent farmers were beginning to think that the old methods could, after all, be bettered.

While they were slowly arriving at this painful conclusion the men of science had been working out the laws of vegetable growth, without an understanding of which cultivating the soil must have remained a purely practical and traditional art. Joseph Priestley, Jean Ingenhousz, and Jean Senebier had revealed the process by which green plants, when exposed to sunlight, absorb the carbon dioxide of the air, assimilate the carbon, and liberate the oxygen once more into the atmosphere. De Saussure in 1804, when he published his *Recherches chimiques sur la végétation*, not only corroborated these discoveries, but analysed and explained the mineral or ash constituents of plants, so that with the popularizing lectures of Sir Humphry Davy in 1813 the scientific world was presented with a picture, not very comprehensive, and not in Davy's views altogether accurate, of the manner in which vegetation drew a part of its nourishment from the atmosphere and a part from the

soil. By the thirties the subject had become an absorbing one for scientists. Jean Bous-singault was working out many details in France and Justus von Liebig at Giessen was putting what he conceived to be the finishing touches to the elucidation of the whole life-cycle. Although Liebig's great and stimulating work on *Organic Chemistry in its Application to Agriculture and Physiology* did not appear until 1840, it was beginning to be clear that a fairly simple scheme, if it could once be revealed, would suffice to explain the process by which plants grow. Of course life itself would still remain as mysterious as ever, for the vital principle must inevitably escape the observation of the chemist with his crucibles, his glass tubes, and his acids. But even to know merely the material composition of plants and its source was a consolation.

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To John Lawes, at the time when he began to defile the air of Rothamsted Hall with the odours of a laboratory, all this was nothing but pure science. As a chemist he was interested, but as a farmer he was not concerned. What did concern him was that he did not seem able to grow turnips successfully on his heavy land. The fly attacked the young plants before they could develop stamina, and Lawes lost his crop. He tried various fertilizers to make plants grow

vigorously enough to resist the effects of the pest but without avail.

Lord Dacre, who farmed next to him, pointed out to him the remarkable fact that bone dust, with which he had no success at all, provided a sure crop on other soils, and suggested that he make an effort to discover the cause of this strange discrepancy. No doubt it occurred to the noble lord that he had before him a scientist, that scientists were people who looked into causes, and that this little problem certainly deserved to be investigated. At any rate Lawes was soon at work with the usual equipment of inquirers into the mysteries of vegetation, prim little pots growing prim little plants, each with its own peculiar fertilizer, carefully watched, tended, and labelled. It is an interesting question how long he would have gone on thus if an unexpected event had not changed the direction of his researches. A broker in London asked him whether he could find any use for spent animal charcoal (charcoal made from bones), used in sugar refining, and precipitated gypsum, both of these substances having no commercial value. Lawes accepted a few tons of the materials, and as he then had on hand a quantity of sulphuric acid for his calomel manufacture, he put the charcoal and acid together, making superphosphate of lime.

This compound, when applied to the turnips, produced a remarkable effect. The pots were

abandoned and the superphosphate was taken into the fields, where it increased the yield of turnips by seven tons an acre. Bones, it was discovered, could also be converted into superphosphate by the same process, and thus what had in its simple form been useless on Lawes's heavy soil became as valuable there as anywhere. After extensive trials in his fields in 1840 and 1841 Lawes took out a patent for the manufacture of the new magic substance and began to contemplate setting up an industrial establishment.

Until this time Lawes had been carrying on his experiments much as he had acquired his education, in a somewhat desultory fashion, on a small scale, in small pots, or on small bits of land. His early discoveries encouraged him to envision now a wider scope for his investigations. Nothing is more inconclusive than a one or two year trial in agriculture, so cunningly varied are the conditions supplied by Nature, so differently spaced are the sunny days and the wet seasons, so changeable are the conditions of the soil from one season to the next, so intricate the effects of one crop on its successors. Here were subjects that required for their elucidation experiments carried on over many years, over decades, and in the fields themselves. Perhaps it was Dr. Daubeney's suggestion in the first volume of the journal of the Royal Agricultural Society, of the need of an experimental farm that inspired the eager young man to enter upon such a



burdensome, expensive, and hazardous undertaking in 1842.

Fields of several acres were laid out in plots to grow wheat and turnips, in some cases with no fertilizer, in others with various fertilizers or combinations, and contrary to all past experience the crops were grown continually, year after year, on the same plots. Such a policy had always been sure ruin in the past, soon exhausting the soil below the point where it would give a profitable return, as the unmanured plots were not long in demonstrating. But this was no mere bushel-counting affair ; the fertilizers were weighed, the ammonia salts, the superphosphates, the potash ; the grain and straw were measured and analysed in the laboratory, statistics began to pile up and an unending vista was revealed of exciting experiments, unguessed discoveries, and, as the inevitable, constant, testing accompaniment of science—drudgery. All was managed with the most meticulous care. Nothing was left to guesswork, the bane of agriculture through the ages. In time even the weather came under investigation, and at last the very water which had drained through the soil was captured again and analysed to discover what fertility, what nitrogen and minerals, it carried away in solution. New crops were added to the experiments, beans, clover, barley, and ultimately meadow grass ; combinations of crops in rotation were tried ; the nutritive values of various foods for

sheep, pigs, and cattle came under investigation ; and at one time the whole bodies of ten farm animals were chemically analysed, down to the last hair and scrap of bone.

It fell to the lot of a young student named Joseph Henry Gilbert, who had been studying in Germany under the famous Justus von Liebig, Professor of Chemistry in the University of Giessen, to manage the Rothamsted laboratory throughout its owner's life. Already in 1843, when the systematic field experiments had entered their second year, it had become evident that the project in hand was assuming greater proportions than Lawes, none too rigorously trained as a chemist, about to embark on a highly successful career of business, and, besides, not endowed with any superhuman qualities, could manage unaided. He could not have found a more loyal helper. To the outside world Gilbert showed sometimes a rather narrow and captious temper, especially in scientific controversy, but with the laboratory he identified himself completely ; it became his life work and to such an extent that sometimes Lawes himself seemed to be thrown into the background. Already in 1847, when Lawes became "very seriously ill", Gilbert was able to take over the complete management, for the time being, of the work. It was Gilbert<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert to D. Campbell, March 9th, 1847, Gilbert's Rothamsted correspondence (these papers are to be found in bound volumes in the library of the Rothamsted Agricultural Experimental Station, Harpenden, and will be referred to here as Rothamsted corresp.).

who conducted the correspondence with London and other chemists commissioned to make analyses of samples (for the work soon exceeded the capacities of the Rothamsted laboratory), who supervised the accounts, and who received communications from solicitors regarding the lawsuits which patents seem to have a peculiar faculty of causing.<sup>1</sup>

The old barn at Rothamsted was now become a hive of activity. The invaluable memorials of Lawes and his colleague were appearing in the agricultural journals and spreading the fame of the unique institution. For all was done in the light of day, the fields lay open for every visitor to see, and Lawes eagerly placed himself at the disposal of the farmers and scientists, first the English and later the men of the Continent, and finally the Americans, who came to observe for themselves the school of the fields. Nothing could be better calculated to impress than the plots ranged side by side, each with its own system of cultivation, but all subjected to the same conditions of weather and type of soil, yet varying so widely in their appearance. Here, active, untiring, helpful, unassuming, simple, small of figure, great in enthusiasm, John Lawes could be seen on many days explaining the history and culture of each plot and suggesting in plain, non-technical language conclusions to be drawn from it.

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert to Lawes, March 24th, 1847, March 25th, 1847, and following; H. G. French to Gilbert, October 1st, 1849, October 4th, 1849; Fyson, Curling and Hope to Gilbert, Rothamsted corresp.

In the agricultural world Rothamsted became a word to conjure with. The men of science, the professors, the students, the farmers, enthusiasts, critics, sceptics came, and, having looked, retired convinced, if not that Lawes was right in all he said, at least that a great and momentous experiment was being carried on. Americans, looking awestruck at Broadbalk field, where the first wheat plots were laid out, declared that they had "learnt more from this field than from any other agricultural experiment in the world". They imitated it by carrying on similar experiments with maize and could not too heartily express their sense of gratitude when Lawes consented to write chapters for their agricultural works.

Long before Cousin Jonathan had reached this pitch of adulation recognition had taken a concrete form in England. A public subscription was set on foot from the proceeds of which a laboratory was constructed to replace the barn used prior to this time, and thus the enterprise was ensured a permanence not entirely dependent on the purse of its creator. It became, in a sense, almost a public institution, but, as always with the English of those days, by a kind of circumlocution which allowed the experiments to preserve the character of a private enterprise. It was inconceivable at that time that the government should undertake such investigations. Lawes himself, who still and always bore the

great burden of current expenses, recognized something of this public interest, for he announced when the laboratory was presented to him that he had provided for the continuance of the experiments and the publication of their results for at least five years after his death. And there was reason that he should do so, as already material had accumulated which it would take years to place before the public. "This infant of mine", he said, ". . . combines with the helplessness of a babe the appetite of a giant. When, some twelve years ago, I delivered it into the arms of its present nurse, Dr. Gilbert, it was struggling for an existence. Under his tender management it has arrived at its present thriving condition."

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Fortunately it is not necessary to revise the principles of human nature and erect John Lawes into a plaster saint who set about enlightening the world on the subject of food purely from love of his fellow beings or hope of a reward on high. Doubtless he did induce the Victorian world, always inclined to shy away from so frank a subject as that of fertilizers, to face the facts of plant life, and he also, we may be sure, felt a quite venial glow of satisfaction in the knowledge of the good he was doing, of the miracles he was working for the farmers, and of the increased population, the Victorian criterion of progress,

which he was making possible for England and the world ; but he found it very much to his own material advantage, too. The patent for the manufacture of superphosphate of lime had not been secured in 1842 to no purpose. A factory was set up in the next year at Deptford Creek. So rapidly did the business grow that the fossil phosphates of England (coprolites) and the supply of bones was not sufficient, and the whole output of the Norwegian apatite mines was contracted for. In 1857 a new site of a hundred acres was purchased at Barking Creek, on which a much larger factory was erected, with a large plant for the manufacture of sulphuric acid. Later a factory at Millwall for making tartaric and citric acid was acquired and a sugar plantation (a commercial failure) was secured in Queensland, Australia. In short, Lawes became a business man, spent two days a week in London, accumulated a fortune, and was able in 1872 to sell his manure business alone for £300,000. From such sources came the profits which were ploughed in at Rothamsted. What better advertisement could Lawes have conceived for his manufacture of chemical fertilizers? He was certainly an enthusiastic scientist and intensely interested in all the problems of cultivation, but he was no fool and he could not have been ignorant that he reaped profits in business on even the most unremunerative of his experiments.

For all his business and riches, his heart remained at Rothamsted. And there a great part of his interest, and, indeed, his life work was absorbed with a controversy which had very little to do immediately with superphosphate of lime. After all, what is a scientist without a controversy? Without a thesis into which he will fit all facts, like victims on the Procrustean bed, the inquirer of science is but an ethereal being, a creator of profound truths, yet hardly a man. John Lawes was very much a man, and in scientific dispute, for Lawes possessed withal a farmer's genial good humour, his colleague, Gilbert, somewhat surpassed him.

The devil to be exorcised in this affair took the form of none other than Justus von Liebig, the opinionated professor of chemistry under whom Gilbert had himself studied for a short time at the University of Giessen. Probably no man ever made a greater single contribution to the science and art of agriculture than Liebig did in his work on *Organic Chemistry in its Application to Agriculture and Physiology*, presented as a report to the British Association in 1840. There, on the basis of two generations of investigation, the work of de Saussure, Davy, Boussingault, and many others, for the first time was revealed in its complete form what appeared to be the full life-cycle of plants and animals, the whole amazing process by which the vegetation of the earth draws up from the soil the mineral salts

dissolved there by the rain, by which the green leaves, when exposed to sunlight, absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, extract the carbon from it, and discharge the remaining oxygen again into the air, there to be breathed in by the animal forms of life and transformed back again into the carbonized gas indispensable for a vegetable existence.

It was a fascinating book that Liebig had written and it achieved instant recognition. In six years as many editions were published. Liebig, though regarded with suspicion and disgust by many of his colleagues at Giessen, where chemistry was thought of as an outlandish, undignified, and unwelcomely novel subject of study, became famous, and his pronouncements, especially as they were put forward in the most dogmatic form, received the veneration due to indisputable doctrines. Lawes and Gilbert readily recognized the signal importance of the book. But they did not do so blindly ; instead they saw in it a set of "brilliant generalizations" which their experimental fields were admirably adapted to test under the actual conditions of agriculture.

They had the more opportunity to do so as Liebig had not only supplied the world with ideas but undertook to participate in their application. It was of the essence of his theories that, while plants secured their carbon and nitrogen in one form or another from the air, they were dependent on the soil for the mineral



parts of their substance. Consequently, Liebig argued, as the air would take care of itself, it was only necessary to replenish the supply of mineral salts in the soil in order to replace the fertility which was removed in the crops. To give practical application to this idea he ordered an English manufacturer to prepare a chemical fertilizer on his formula, patented it, and put it on the market as a complete plant food. It was applied to the experimental fields at Rothamsted. There, and in every other place where the trial was made it proved a complete failure, to the consternation and mystification of its creator.

It soon appeared where the difficulty lay. Fearing that the rain would wash the plant food from the soil, Liebig had taken care to make it, and particularly the phosphorus which it contained, insoluble, but in so doing he had also made it impossible for the plants to absorb it. Lawes and Gilbert, who in the manufacture of superphosphate proceeded, and successfully, upon the exactly opposite assumption that it was necessary to supply nourishment in a soluble form, took an active part in the dispute which arose over the merits of Liebig's product. Is it any wonder that their confidence in him was somewhat shaken? The great professor had actually manufactured a fertilizer on purely theoretical principles without any tests in the fields, a procedure so rash that it would have never suggested itself to the practical-minded Lawes,

who remained fully conscious from the first of the immense complexity of the agricultural arts. Nor would Liebig admit that he was in the wrong until he had discovered the slip in his theoretical reasoning. It was as if he thought the fields must be wrong rather than his theory, and only after years of research had solved the mystery did he capitulate. "*Ich hatte mich an der Weisheit des Schöpfers versündigt,*" he wrote at last, "*und dafür meine gerechte Strafe empfangen . . .*"<sup>1</sup>

The question of Liebig's patent fertilizer constituted only a by-play in a much larger controversy between Rothamsted and Giessen, in which no articles of capitulation were ever signed. It concerned so common, prosaic, and all-pervasive a substance as nitrogen, then frequently called azote, which, as every school-boy knows, makes up a considerable proportion of the atmosphere. Liebig had been able in his great work to explain without difficulty how plants absorbed their carbon in the form of carbon dioxide from the air and their minerals from the salts in the earth; but when he came to deal with the equally vital nitrogen he found himself on more difficult ground. Did plants receive their nitrogen from the air or from the soil? Boussingault had already urged evidence indicating that plants could not assimilate free nitrogen.

<sup>1</sup> It is clear from the dates that (contrary to a statement made by Russell M. Garnier in his *History of the English Landed Interest* [London, 1908], II, 433) the Rothamsted experiments did not arise out of this failure, as they were already under way.

De Saussure before him had concluded that they received their nitrogen partly from nitrogenous compounds in the soil and partly from the small amount of ammonia, a gaseous compound of nitrogen and hydrogen, found in the atmosphere.

Liebig, as he himself thought, worked out the process completely and with what seemed a flawless and irresistible logic. Well-farmed land, he pointed out, retains its fertility in spite of the fact that nitrogen is constantly removed in the crops and only a small proportion of this is returned in the form of animal manure. Therefore the nitrogen must come somehow from the atmosphere. This was accomplished by the ammonia, but not directly; the rain dissolved the ammonia from the air and so carried it into the soil where the vegetation could absorb it through its roots. It was all very simple, supposing that the atmosphere contained such a startlingly large amount of ammonia. Convinced that this was so, Liebig set out to prove it, and, naturally enough, as he had prejudged the whole case by his logic, he was able to establish this crucial point to his own satisfaction. It was on this hypothesis that he founded his famous mineral theory, for he maintained that, as the atmosphere took care of the carbon and the nitrogen, the only fertilizers which required to be added to the soil were the mineral salts.

Even he was not able, at first, to rid himself of the idea that nitrogenous manures were

valuable, but when the second edition of his work on *Organic Chemistry* appeared in 1843 the mineral theory was set forth in all its dogmatic, bald, and unadorned glory. The atmosphere could be trusted to supply enough nitrogen, not only for natural vegetation, but even for cultivated crops. Man's need supply only minerals.

It was just here that Lawes came into opposition to Liebig. He found from the beginning, working as he did in the fields as well as in the laboratory, that crops needed an artificial supply of nitrogenous materials more than they did minerals. The plots supplied with ammoniacal salts produced large crops; those which had none, even if they received minerals, produced small crops. Even Liebig's own patented plant food, he discovered, owed its negligible virtue to the slight amount of nitrogen which had inadvertently entered into its composition.

There was an irony in this which somehow failed to appeal to the theorist of Giessen. He conceived a violent contempt for the men of Rothamsted who had the effrontery to test his general principles by practice, who mixed the laboratory with the field, and he proclaimed his indignation in a long closely-printed note in his *Letters on Chemistry*. The Rothamsted experiments were written down as being "entirely devoid of value as the foundation for general conclusions" and to their authors was ascribed

"all the courage derived from the want of intimate acquaintance with the subject" as the only explanation of the statements which they had made. Controversy waxed hot. Liebig, visiting England, was invited to come to Rothamsted and see for himself, but he alleged that he had turned his attention from agriculture to physiological chemistry and refused, rather ungraciously, to come. A second invitation proved no more successful.<sup>1</sup>

A meeting with Liebig seems to have been arranged soon, however, and to have led to a reconciliation. Lawes and Gilbert took an active part in promoting a Liebig testimonial in 1853.<sup>2</sup> But this was not peace. It was a truce. In 1855 two impudent attacks came from Liebig's pen in which the Rothamsted data themselves were drawn upon to overthrow the Rothamsted arguments and at Glasgow the contestants locked horns before the British Association.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Graham to Gilbert, August 14th, 1851, Rothamsted corresp.: "Yesterday I had an opportunity of talking to Liebig & communicating your invitation. But I find that he is at present occupied exclusively with physiological Chemistry & indisposed to return to the chemistry of farming. He is, therefore, disinclined to visit Rothamsted, but much obliged by the attention of yourself & Mr. Lawes & kind invitation." Same to same, November 5th, 1851: "I am afraid, however, that at present he is not much disposed to return to his agricultural speculations."

<sup>2</sup> A. W. Hoffmann to Gilbert, January 9th, 1853, Rothamsted corresp.: "I am glad to find that your visit to Liebig has led to a perfectly satisfactory mutual understanding, which cannot fail to confer much benefit upon the elucidation of the question under examination." Same to same, December 20th, 1853.

<sup>3</sup> Graham to Gilbert, March 17th, 1855; Gilbert to Lyon Playfair, July 31st, 1855; Playfair to Gilbert, August 6th, 1855; Gilbert to E. Risler, February 23rd, 1856, Rothamsted corresp.

Liebig was an exasperating antagonist, for he had not a very highly developed sense of fairness and his handling of arguments made all fish that came to his net. If Gilbert had a single physical eye, having lost one by a gunshot wound some years before the Rothamsted days, it was Liebig who had the one-eyed mind, which threw everything out of perspective and fitted it into his own conceptions.

Throughout the controversy the Englishmen treated their German opponent with the most scrupulous courtesy, not hesitating even to seek out opportunities for a personal intercourse which might very well have disposed of all differences. For Liebig, with his "Adleraugen", as one of his biographers has called his eyes, possessed a magnetic fascination when seen in the flesh and rarely exhibited under such circumstances the tactless bluster, the overbearing contempt of opponents, and the harsh dogmatism which seemed to take possession of him when he had his pen in his hand. Regarding Lawes' private opinion of such bluster no evidence has transpired to show that his usual sweet and understanding temper forsook him, but it is clear that Gilbert's scrupulous politeness in print, demanded by the moral code of the English gentleman, concealed a mordant personal bitterness. He poured out his exasperation in a letter to Professor August Voelcker of the

Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester,  
October 26th, 1855 :

" I am very glad to find that so competent and independent an observer as yourself shd have found precisely the same conclusion as to the morale and fairness of Liebig's attack, as we ourselves had done, who were likely to feel this perhaps more strongly than others. I can only say, that if a young man without an established fame, had written & criticized with the utter disregard to truth & fairness wh: Liebig has manifested—& further with the utter want of consistency & valid argument, he wd have been irrevocably black-balled as wanting, both in the integrity of a gentleman, & in any decent observance of the requirements of logic. We had hoped he wd have yielded something, & given us an excuse for keeping back the overwhelming evidence wh: must sooner or later condemn the course he has taken—but thanks to his own temper & obstinacy, we cannot now spare him as we would."<sup>1</sup>

This much is clear about Lawes, that he agreed with Gilbert's description of Liebig's unfairness. But Gilbert went farther.

" . . . Liebig traffics with his reputation," he wrote to another correspondent, "in a manner which would ruin anyone of less standing who dared to use such means. . . . Agricultural Chemistry has suffered much from having a Pope—believed to be not only infallible, but beyond the reach of question or criticism by any mere mortal !"<sup>2</sup>

Faced with such an unscrupulous opponent, Rothamsted carried on the struggle, at once the

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert to Voelcker, October 26th, 1855, Rothamsted corresp.

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert to the editor of the *Farmer's Magazine*, May 17th, 1856, Rothamsted corresp.

more cautiously and the more vigorously. The war was carried into enemy territory by translations of the English views into French and German.<sup>1</sup> The success of a vigorous resistance was seen when Liebig's slashing attack in the introduction to his *Natural Laws of Husbandry* was published. Professor John Blyth, who edited it for the English edition, appears to have made an attempt to find some ground of compromise acceptable to the contestants and to the English public.

"I have obtained the *Einleitung* [introduction]," wrote Gilbert to Blyth, in January, 1863, "& from the glance I have been able to give at its contents it seems to me that it would have been really fairer to those attacked to let Liebig take the full responsibility of his own most discredited misstatements & bad temper rather than to lend an additional weight to his misrepresentations by putting them forward in a more reasonable tone.

"I expect, however, that in the course of controversy Liebig's wholesale abuse, & almost systematic unfairness of statement will come pretty fully before the English public sooner or later. He certainly owes you much if you are at all instrumental in modifying the tone of this production for English readers & admirers. I had heard some time ago that we were to be 'cut up into mincemeat.'"<sup>2</sup>

But, Liebig refusing to accept any alterations at all, the whole *Einleitung* was cut out from the English edition.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert to E. Risler, February 23rd, 1856; Gilbert to Dr. Dietrich Brandis, February 23rd, 1856, Rothamsted corresp.

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert to Blyth, January 3rd, 1863; cf. William Allen Miller to Gilbert, September 15th, 1856, Rothamsted corresp.

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert to H. T. Thompson, October 31st, 1863, Rothamsted corresp.



The death of the pope of agriculture in 1873 cheated Lawes and Gilbert of the victory which they anticipated, for Liebig passed away unshriven of the Rothamsted gospel. And, ironically enough, new discoveries soon drove his opponents themselves from the field. When a controversy, and especially a scientific controversy, is hotly contested over many years by competent investigators it is generally safe to conclude that both sides are wrong—and, what is the same thing, both are right. Lawes and Gilbert had started with their attention concentrated on the continuous growth of wheat, year after year, on the same land. They discovered, without the possibility of error, that when the wheat received nitrogenous manures it prospered ; when it did not, the crops declined and analysis showed the disappearance of the nitrogen from the soil. There could be no doubt about it. The plants were starving for want of nitrogen, and that in spite of the fact that they were constantly bathed in the nitrogen of the air.

One solution for the difficulty lay in the use of ammoniacal salts, such as Chile saltpetre (nitrate of soda), which were already being imported from South America in the forties. It was the prospective exhaustion of the deposits there that led Sir William Crookes in 1898 to predict a great agricultural crisis for the middle of the next century. But Lawes did not, merely because he

was something of a scientist, think merely in terms of such chemicals, and he therefore, even in the early days, was inclined to recommend the importation of stock foods like oil cake, which would produce a suitable fertilizer from the barnyard, and a dependence for the rest upon the rotation of crops.

From his reference here to the rotation of crops it is evident that Lawes was already inclined to attribute the accumulation of nitrogen in the soil to such a practice. But he was as far as Liebig from a correct explanation of the phenomenon. The experiments with permanent meadow, begun in 1856, presented rather disquieting results, for it was discovered that in the meadow land, where, of course, gramineous, leguminous, and other plants grew without discrimination, it was not necessary to add nitrogenous material but that the mere supply of minerals alone resulted in the actual increase of nitrogen in the soil. Had Liebig, after all, been right? It was all very complex and mysterious—and disturbing. But still it was not necessary to have recourse to the air. Hitherto untapped stores of nitrogen in the soil—so Lawes and Gilbert concluded, a little hesitantly—had been tapped by the *leguminosae* through the aid of the mineral fertilizers.

In this way they were able to explain the fascinating phenomenon of fairy rings. In English meadows it is not uncommon to see rings

of luxuriously growing grass which gradually increase in circumference until at last they break up and disappear. It had long been understood that these rings were the work of certain mushroom fungi. The Rothamsted workers now took up samples of the soil in and about these rings and were able to show in 1883 that the fungi transformed the organic matter of the soil into nitrates, which the vegetation could in turn absorb; hence the fairy rings of grass which followed the fungi as they spread farther and farther in search of nourishment.

But the mystery of the nitrogen remained, nevertheless, and in that and the following years Rothamsted was very busy with the leguminous plants, now recognized as the crux of the problem. There was something decidedly to explain, for clover in its growth undoubtedly secured from some source a supply of nitrogen that grain plants could not get. It was a little unfair of Nature, perhaps, that the solution should prove to be what it was. For the problem was not a chemical one at all. To answer it there was required a new science which had hardly been more than a wild dream when the Rothamsted experiments began. Hellriegel and Wilfarth, looking through a microscope in 1886, found the root nodules of clover filled with bacteria (*bacillus radicicola*) which had the power of fixing the free nitrogen of the air and so transferring it, in the decaying roots, to the soil.

What a blow this was at Rothamsted ! But it was true. Experiments with potted plants were begun to test the new theory and it was soon apparent that it could no longer be doubted. Lawes and Gilbert had been wrong in saying that plants could not get their nitrogen from the air. Liebig had been wrong when he said that plants secured all the nitrogen they required from the ammonia given to the soil by rain. And yet they were both right, for wheat can take no molecule of nitrogen directly from the air, and yet the atmosphere is the ultimate source of all that is required to grow it.

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By this time the enterprise which had begun in such a small way some forty years before had become a complex affair, with the daily routine of which Lawes had very little to do. By 1856 something like forty acres were being used in the experiments, which included at one time or another crops of beans, clover, rotations of wheat, fallow and beans, barley, and grass. Experiments with stock feeding were begun in 1848, first with sheep, then hogs, and ultimately cattle, and the carcasses of many animals were subjected to chemical analysis. In all this, and in the many other experiments the work of collecting data and preparing the formal statements of results was left chiefly to the care of the faithful, meticulous, and indefatigable Gilbert. At last

in 1889 in order to perpetuate the enterprise effectively, Lawes established a trust of three trustees with a fund of £100,000 and a ninety-nine year lease of the laboratory and experimental fields.

This change only represented what had been becoming more and more true for some years. Keen as was Lawes's interest in scientific matters, he never allowed himself to stray very far from the immediate questions of the fields. Nor did he ever lose his perspective so far as to conceive of the salvation of agriculture as bound up in chemicals put into the ground. "It is one thing . . . to grow crops in a lecture room," he wrote, "and quite another to grow them in a field." Already in the fifties, too, he was becoming a public man, on whose time many calls were made. Royal Commissions demanded his services ; experiments at Woburn under the auspices of the Royal Agricultural Society, which was interested in trying the Rothamsted methods on other soil, required his assistance ; practical, simple, non-technical articles and lectures for the farmers, the preparation of an annual estimate of the wheat crop, published in *The Times*, these and numerous other like activities made him one of the agricultural figures best known to the public of his day. A baronetcy, honorary degrees from the universities, the Legion of Honour, and in 1893 a Rothamsted Jubilee demonstrated the esteem in which he was held.

It was a common judgment that James Caird expressed when he wrote in 1878 that "To Mr. J. B. Lawes the agriculture of this country is more indebted than to any other living man."

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The person about whom such a flattering remark could be made, who received such honours and cut such a figure in the business world, was himself a simple and unaffected individual. To the end he remained "Squire Lawes", the farmer, the man of the fields. It was only the superfluity of his inexhaustible energy which went into his factories and his public pursuits; and the extent of that excess is evidenced by his readiness to drive in his carriage several times a week to St. Albans before the railway line was extended to Harpenden. Politics had no attraction for him, and even in his own neighbourhood he seldom appeared in any concerns not immediately connected with Rothamsted.

Such a man leaves behind him happy and affectionate memories. For some time he had in the park at Rothamsted a pair of tame otters, which lived in a secluded pool. Lawes used to bring them a hamper of fish whenever he returned from London, and they, hearing and identifying the sound of his carriage, would hurry across the grass to the road to meet him, capering like dogs before the horses' noses, until at the end of the drive they received their reward and

retired once more to the pool with it. In Scotland, where Lawes spent his holidays as an enthusiastic deerstalker and salmon fisher, these curious creatures accompanied him and were his companions on mysterious fishing expeditions during the night, until at last one of the pair was killed and the other wandered off. But if this otter deserted him, the salmon in a certain fishery which he had leased seemed sorry to see him leave them when the lease expired. He had had good sport, but never any fish over seven pounds, until the last day, when, as he explained it, the salmon made a complimentary and generous effort of self-sacrifice and he caught three ranging from nine to twenty-one pounds. Sir John Lawes, it would seem, was not above the vice of fish stories.

At Rothamsted the labourers regarded him with deep affection, and anecdotes of his kindnesses, his placing benches around the trees by the footpaths, his assisting overburdened children and old women with their parcels, survived many years to keep his memory green. The labourers had good cause to remember him, for in a day when farm workers were commonly regarded as mere domesticated beasts of burden, when Joseph Arch and the Agricultural Labourers' Union were yet unheard of, and when the patronage of the better classes took, all too frequently, the form of thin soup, cast-off clothing dispensed at the cottage door, harsh repression

of the faults consequent on squalor, and saccharine moral advice, Lawes came to the assistance of his dependants in a practical and sensible way. It was in 1852 that he began with some eight or ten acres divided into garden allotments of an eighth of an acre or less and parcelled out among the agricultural labourers and others of the village. A few years later the addition of as much land again raised the number of tenants to more than 160, and ultimately further additions increased the number of allotments to 334, covering a total area of something over forty acres, and all charged with rent at the rate of five shillings to the eighth of an acre.

But with this merely economic enterprise Lawes was not satisfied. He saw that there was a great deal of drunkenness among the workers and that this evil brought all its customary degradation in its train. Somehow it seems, by a contradiction of the principles of mathematics, that a man is never so poor that he cannot find the means necessary for intoxication, that is, for drowning his sorrows. The squire set them all an excellent example of moral rectitude by attending the church services assiduously on Sundays, and never failing to arrive among the first worshippers, but the methodical righteousness of those who can afford to keep watch over their own public conduct does not always seem to have the effect which is desired. It struck him that the labourers frequented the public



house in order to satisfy, not their thirst, but their social impulses. Gentlemen in town did not spend their time in the public houses because they had their clubs, in the country their manor houses. If the workers had their own club they would be freed from the pressure of paying for their entertainment by the purchase of drinks.

To a later age all this sounds simple and easily comprehensible, but in the first decades of the Victorian era, when rural England still retained an almost feudal rigidity of society, it was nothing short of heresy. The workers, in the orthodox view, must be kept in their place, and above all they must not be encouraged to congregate with each other lest it occur to them to combine against their betters. Not a few could remember, and remember with something akin to panic, the Peasants' Revolt of 1830, when rick burnings and mob violence had served to remind the country gentleman that all was not right with the lower orders. Writing twenty years after he broached his plan, Lawes remembered the horror which it inspired.

"One or two, to whom I mentioned the subject, shook their heads, and suggested the exclusion of tobacco, and stringent regulations respecting the allowance of beer. The idea of one or two hundred men assembling night after night in one place was by no means approved of, and it was thought that such an arrangement would not be conducive to the peace or the sobriety of the community in general."

Not much troubled by these fears, Lawes continued with his project, and there rose in the midst of the land then being used for the allotments a club building consisting of two rooms, one a large, airy common room, lighted with a sky light and two windows and supplied with fireplace and stove, the other smaller and intended to serve as a library and also as a co-operative store, the whole being surrounded by a roofed veranda. The structure completed, Lawes secured a barrel or two of beer and posted a notice inviting the allotment gardeners to attend a meeting. The free beer proved to be a good bait, the squire explained the project, and the club was launched. After the first year the club members managed their affairs themselves, appointed their own committee, discovered from experience that it paid to choose efficient managers, bought and sold their own beer like any gentleman's club in Pall Mall, and succeeded in greatly vexing the publicans, who discovered that they could not force the club to secure a licence from the magistrates.

The unique experiment, which made Rothamsted something of a social as well as a field laboratory, soon attracted the attention of that inveterate lover of the common man, Charles Dickens. It happened that in 1859, two years after the organization of the allotment club, Lawes was serving on a Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the possibility of using

town sewage for agricultural purposes. One of his fellow-members was Henry Austin, a brother-in-law of the novelist. Through him Dickens became interested. "Philosewers [Austin]," he wrote, "then mentioned to me that a friend of his in an agricultural county—say a Hertfordshire friend—had, for two years last past, endeavoured to reconcile the poor man and his beer to public morality, by making it a point of honour between himself and the poor man that the latter should use his beer and not abuse it."

Accordingly on the occasion of one of the frequent concerts which Mrs. Lawes and her friends were accustomed to give before the club, Dickens and Austin went down to Harpenden to see how "Friar Bacon" managed these things. He was a little daunted at first by the clouds, "so immoderately watery, and so very much disposed to sour all the beer in Hertfordshire, that they seemed to have taken the pledge," but when "the sun burst forth gaily in the afternoon, and gilded the old gables, and old mullioned windows, and old weathercock and old clockface of the quaint old house which is the dwelling of the man we sought," Dickens was fascinated with Rothamsted, and particularly by "two peacocks, apparently in very tight new boots, occasionally crossing the gravel at a distance." The concert took place in the new laboratory, the elect of the village occupying a side gallery and the labourers,

to the number of some five hundred, the main floor.<sup>1</sup>

Already at the time of Dickens' visit the allotments had led to pig clubs, organized in groups of five, each man borrowing a pound of the squire to buy a pig and assuming joint responsibility for the repayments. There were also flour clubs and a savings bank, and even for a time a co-operative store, financed and managed by Lawes under the supervision of a board of directors chosen by the labourers themselves. No one showed himself more assiduous for the prosperity of these organizations than did John Lawes himself, who performed in person his part in their obligations. But except for the allotment club they all came to an end in the course of time, the bank giving way to the Post Office Savings Bank, and the pig and flour clubs and the store failing from the irresponsibility of their beneficiaries. Even the most enlightened paternalism cannot always succeed.

Successful or not, it was at least enlightened, which is as much as to say that Lawes understood his labourers and knew how to treat them with respect. If he called them together and explained his new plans for them he had the sense to leave them to the management of the clubs when once they were formed. Dickens remembered his saying,

<sup>1</sup> Charles Dickens: "The Poor Man and his Beer," *All the Year Round*, I (April 30th, 1859), 13-16.

"It is not much. It is no wonderful thing. There used to be a great deal of drunkenness here, and I wanted to make it better if I could. The people are very ignorant, and have been much neglected, and I wanted to make *that* better, if I could. My utmost object was, to help them to a little self-government and a little homely pleasure. I only show the way to better things, and advise them. I never act for them ; I never interfere ; above all, I never patronize."

At the meetings of the board of directors for the co-operative store he used to pull a cake of tobacco from his pocket, fill his pipe, and pass the cake on to his nearest neighbour as a gesture of equality.

Still, much as he dreaded the word, it was patronage, and Lawes, though in the least offensive manner, was always the squire, the bountiful lord. The annual dinner held at the time of the yearly meeting of the allotment club was a festival event presided over by Lawes with great gusto. Assisted by the local clergy and some of the gentry he carved diligently for the lowly, handing out the slices of beef and bits of homely humour with agreeable impartiality. It was the same bountiful lord who on the occasion of his daughter's marriage arranged an excursion to the Crystal Palace for the allotment holders, and again in 1893 celebrated the Rothamsted Jubilee with a great show of fireworks for the benefit of those who did not like to experience the exhaustion of another journey.

In a day when squires were supposed to be squires and labourers were still supposed fairly

to pull off their forelocks from humility in their presence, such a man as Lawes, great-hearted, fatherly, considerate, could not fail to win the esteem of all his lesser people, and he died amid the universal grief of England in the last year of the century.

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The visitor at Rothamsted Station to-day, approaching from the side of the St. Albans road and Harpenden Common, on which the laboratory faces, is likely to find the door locked and the little yard in front, where stands the granite boulder set up in 1893 as a monument to Lawes's work, presenting the appearance of having been laid down to permanent meadow and not recently mowed. The memory of Sir John Bennet Lawes does not seem to have been kept as green as it might be. But all this is deceptive. Once the visitor has penetrated to the rear of the laboratory, and seen the beautifully tended grounds there, the greenhouse, and the laboratory buildings, and, inside, has observed the busy industry of inquisitive youth, overlooked by the portrait of Sir John which hangs, benevolently watchful, in the staircase leading to the library, and once he has had tea with these quiet, earnest young people—and with the wasps—in the garden, then he realizes that the Rothamsted Station is still much as its founder would have wished it to be. The experimental fields are still there,

even to the fifty-year-old "jungle", all as instructive as any object lesson could well be. And if agricultural science has developed ideas and made discoveries carrying knowledge into realms of which he could hardly have dared to dream, it cannot be doubted that all this was in no small part made possible by the spade-work of Sir John Bennet Lawes.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sir John Lawes wrote a tantalizingly brief "Autobiographical Note", which appeared in *The Agricultural Gazette*, January 2nd, 1888, p. 13. Commemorations were published at the time of his death by two men who knew him well, one by W. Fream: "In Memoriam: Sir John Bennet Lawes, Bart.," *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England* [henceforward cited as *J.R.A.S.E.*], 3rd ser., XI, 511-24; the other by R. Warington: "Reminiscences of Sir John Bennet Lawes," *The Agricultural Gazette*, September 17th, 24th, October 8th, 1900, pp. 180, 196, 228. The article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* by Sir Ernest Clark (*Supplement*, III, 79-82) is informative. A. D. Hall's *The Book of the Rothamsted Experiments* (London, 1905) contains a brief historical essay of considerable merit. A. Ronna's *Rothamsted. Un Demisiècle d'Expériences Agronomiques de MM. Lawes et Gilbert* (Paris, 1900) is helpful.

Lawes's position in relation to the general history of agriculture is well shown in James Caird's works:

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*English Agriculture in 1850-1*. London, 1852.

*The Landed Interest and the Supply of Food*. London, 1878.

A complete list of the articles and pamphlets in which Lawes and his colleagues made known to the world the

results of their experiments would be too long to be of service in this place, but the following, most of them being reprints from the learned journals of the day, are among those which have been valuable in the present study (the collaboration of Sir Henry Gilbert and R. Warington being indicated by the initials) :

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L. and G. : *On Agricultural Chemistry, especially in relation to the Mineral Theory of Baron Liebig.* London, 1851.

L. and G. : *On some points in the Composition of Soils : with Results illustrating the Sources of Fertility of Manitoba Prairie Soils.* London, 1885.

L. : *On Superphosphate of Lime.* Rothamsted, 1856.



L. and G.: *On the Composition of the Ash of Wheat-grain, and Wheat-straw, grown at Rothamsted, in Different Seasons, and by Different Manures.* London, 1884.

L. and G.: *On the Valuation of Unexhausted Manures.* London, 1886.

L. and G.: *Report of Experiments on the Growth of Wheat for Twenty Years in Succession on the Same Land.* London, 1864.

L.: "Restoring Fertility to the Soil," in Joseph Harris's *Talks on Manures*, pp. 332-41 (see below).

L.: "The Rothamsted Allotment Club," *J.R.A.S.E.*, ser. 2, XIII (1877), 387-93.

The manuscript *Rothamsted Correspondence*, which is to be found in bound volumes in the library of the Rothamsted Agricultural Station, is invaluable, both for the history of the experiments and for the personal aspects of the work carried on, particularly the Liebig controversy. The biographical article on Justus von Liebig in the *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig, 1883, vol. XVIII) presents the story of this controversy from a somewhat different point of view.

Lawes's influence in America is attested by two interesting works :

Joseph Harris: *Talks on Manures.* New and enlarged ed. New York, 1883.

Manly Miles: *Description of Houghton Farm.* Cambridge, Mass., 1882.

The personal character of Lawes is indicated by the *Reminiscences of Albert Pell* (Thomas Mackay, ed., London, 1908) and Edwin Grey's *Reminiscences, Tales and Anecdotes of the Laboratories, Staff and Experimental Fields, 1872-1922* (Harpenden, 1922) and the same author's *Cottage Life in a Hertfordshire Village* (St. Albans, 1935). Charles Dickens wrote an account of his visit in *All the Year Round* (I [April 30th, 1859], 13-16) under the title "The Poor Man and his Beer." An account of Lawes's factories is given in an article by John Chalmers Morton: "The Agricultural Commissariat: our Great Supply Establishments," *Agricultural Gazette*, January 2nd, 1888, pp. 8-10.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE COMPOSITE GENTLEMAN

IF the Georgian and Victorian squirearchy ever did become extinct, there is no doubt that it took "an unconscionable time a-dying". Long after the merchant had revealed the potentialities of commerce, long after England had become Napoleon's despised "nation of shop-keepers", and long after the mill-owners had come on the scene as the last reinforcements destined to turn the tide of class struggle, the country gentlemen seemed to be going their calm way almost as if nothing had happened. Occasions on which their serenity suffered interruption merely served to demonstrate their powers of persistence. The surging waves of Liberalism and Democracy, of bourgeois commercialism, of popular equalitarianism, broke over them and left them steady and strong, a solid rock of medievalism in a rising tide of modern life and its complexities.

When commercial and social reforms were conceded in the days of George IV, still the rule of the squirearchs remained. Political upheaval introduced the reign of the last of the Hanoverians; and the voice of the mob—to Wellington ugly, to Francis Place sweet, and to Lord Grey at least serviceable—foreshadowed the casting down of

the idol ; yet when the convulsion had come to an end different men, to be sure, but hardly less country gentlemen, were seen in occupation of the seats of the mighty. The Reform Bill of 1832, it seemed, merely meant government by the Whig aristocrats, not the middle class nor the masses. During the next ten years it was difficult to find in the various governments any member of a class other than that of the landed interest.

The abandonment of agricultural protection in 1846 sounded the knell, because it removed almost the last special privilege which the old ruling class enjoyed. Yet, though there were soon quite ordinary commoners to be seen in the offices of Whitehall, the class in possession was not by any means shouldered out. The last half of the century might be the Indian summer of the squirearchy, a time when they ruled on sufferance, the day of administration rather than mastery, but they remained and in a large measure their ideas remained. The Army, the Church, and Colonial Office were still theirs, and, above all, the Land.

This persistence resulted neither from false sentiment nor from accident. The principle of the survival of the fittest is as applicable to politics as to organic evolution and the country gentlemen had by no means outlived their usefulness on the national stage. They were not industrialists, though a few of them, such as the Dukes of Devonshire and Cleveland, were among

the greatest industrial capitalists in the country, and they did not represent the commercial and manufacturing interests, but, until the Reform Bills of 1884-5, they did represent the interests of agriculture, on which as late as the middle of the century something like half of the population immediately depended. They did not understand the new ways of life, but they had unlimited experience of governing. They were not efficient, but, then, many of them worked for nothing ! They were not always very industrious, but what they did was all to the good, for they had nothing else to do. In short, tradition gave them an influence over all England, which accepted the notion that they were born to govern ; it endowed them with a collective experience, handed on from father to son ; it supplied them with an attitude of mastery, an easy self-assurance which in itself gave them an enormous advantage over any competitors.

The inertia of social institutions, traditions, and classes constitutes one of the fundamental conditions of all historical development. Because it does not act, but for the most part merely resists, because it is not, therefore, so much a force as a surrounding circumstance, an envelope in which the new is developing, a cocoon from which the formed butterfly is emerging, it may easily be taken merely for granted, assumed from the previous stages of history, and left neglected in the background. When the cocoon

is newly spun it is a delicate, intricate, silky structure which commands attention, but when its threads have been cut through by the relentless jaws of the metamorphosed grub within, it is at once forgotten. Even the butterfly knows better, at least until it has got fully out. One might as well study a country's politics without consideration of its geography as to study the history of society without taking account of its survivals.

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Because of such inattention the country gentlemen have been left, except for their activities in the political role, to the writers of stuffy memoirs, to the antiquarians, and to the novelists. At the hands of the latter they did not, in their own day, always receive a treatment calculated to reveal them as they were. For it is difficult to draw any safe conclusions from the caricatures, however entertaining, of a Surtees. Perhaps something more might be said for Anthony Trollope ; but it is George John Whyte-Melville who needs to be rehabilitated and whose novels must be consulted by any student of the landed interests as a social class. Surtees certainly understood his squires ; if he had not he could never have depicted so successfully the fate of his incomparable Facey Romford. But Facey was not a country gentleman, as his creator, not only by his description of Facey's proceedings

but also by his account of that clever fraud's very questionable parentage, was at great pains to point out. Whyte-Melville, by contrast, described in the most matter-of-fact fashion the hopes, ambitions, sports, loves, and business of the landed gentlemen and their sons. Whatever the critics may say of the literary qualities of his work, the student will search in vain for a piece of fiction which touches the lives of the country gentlemen at more points and describes them with more fidelity than such a work as *The Brookes of Bridlemere*. If novels, avowedly not sober history, are in any measure reliable sources for social history, then Whyte-Melville is the novelist of his class.

For he himself was one of the aristocracy, grandson of the fifth Duke of Leeds and son of a landed gentleman of Strathkinness. Born in 1821, taking Eton in his stride, he served appropriately in the Ninety-third Highlanders and in the Coldstream Guards, and returned, after retirement in 1849, to serve in the Turkish cavalry during the Crimean War. The remainder of his life he spent as a fox-hunting sportsman, a lover of horses—his understanding of horse management and the art of "equitation", as shown in his *Riding Recollections*, has seldom been surpassed—and a connoisseur of hunting lore. His numerous novels (to the number of twenty-five), flavoured with the rich smoke of his luxurious cigars, his ubiquitous French phrases,

the somewhat harrowing relentlessness of Victorian emotional effects, and, above all, the authentic, true-ringing life of the country and of the gentry with whom he associated by preference, seem to have come from his pen almost casually, but they are decidedly good stories. Even in his death he was the perfect country gentleman. It was on December 5th, 1878, in the Vale of the White Horse. Hounds had just found a fox. Whyte-Melville, mounted on a favourite old hunter, Shah, was galloping hard for a start of the field when his horse stumbled on the grass headland of a field. The rider fell and was instantly killed.

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Not the least of the facts of which the reader becomes conscious in reading Whyte-Melville is the awareness of their position which the landed class felt. Law, by primogeniture and entail, and tradition, by checking the wasteful impulses of the weakling, insured the integrity of the landed estates, which constituted the very foundation of rural society. The eldest son got all the estate, and with it the title, if there was any, or at least a position which amounted to a title. This it was that made him the one great capitalist of the countryside, and gave him the influence which, Reform Bill or no Reform Bill, put him or his nominee into Parliament. It placed him on

a plane irrevocably above the tradesman, and at the same time assured to him the means of maintaining his position.

As primogeniture was one bulwark, entail was another. For by its operation the possessor became merely a temporary custodian for the heirs, and in a sense a mere agent of his class. The integrity of the estate, moreover, was made independent of his efficiency. He was assured of the privilege of soaking himself in his port wine night after night, year after year, if he so desired, without danger of sacrificing the social position of his successors. This arrangement did not conduce to the wisest management of the land and no doubt often accounted for the rankest waste in agricultural methods. Certainly it did not comport with the ideas of the Manchester School, who made no secret of their contempt for gentlemen complaining of Free Trade when they grew weeds instead of crops (as inexperienced mill-owners were inclined to think they did), neglected the possibilities of machines in favour of labour at starvation wages, and thought more of fox covers than of production. It was natural that Free Traders should desire to apply their principle to the land.

But if primogeniture and entail were anathema to John Bright and others of his ilk they constituted an essential part of a system which in the eyes of the country gentlemen saved England from all the convulsions of the Continent. England had



no *noblesse*. She had no aristocracy of birth, rigidly shut off from the mass of the population. In England the younger sons were in a manner thrown back into the pool of English humanity. Aristocrats by origin, they became commoners by law, mingled with the mass, and spread the tradition of aristocracy everywhere. In this way the governing classes were protected from overcrowding, saved from becoming a closed caste, preserved from a total want of sympathy with the governed, and provided with the best possible means of propaganda. By the force of circumstances the leavening material tended always to assume ample proportions. For, in a society where family, estate, and tradition meant so much, heirs were a prime necessity ; but the certitude of an heir could only be secured by begetting a large family. The eleven brothers and sisters of Grantley Berkeley, the ten children of the fifth Duke of Richmond certainly resulted in a measure from this dynastic pressure. But as only one could inherit, under such circumstances there were likely to be a number of recruits for the common people. Such was the principle which preserved for England her country gentlemen, her peace, and her orderly political and social development at a time when France was being racked with the recurrent spasms consequent on the collapse of the old regime. And indeed, England's comparative immunity from violent shocks is the more remarkable

as she was experiencing infinitely more extreme and more rapid changes in the warp and woof of her life than any other country.

Immunity like this could not be enjoyed without sacrifice. The younger sons were offered up on the altar. Here is the tragedy of the landed classes. Reared in luxury, treated in his youth as the equal of his eldest brother, the heir, accustomed to the highest society, the younger son was suddenly thrown on his own, and his own consisted of a pittance from the estate (on which it was impossible to live in his habitual manner), or, if he was lucky, a living in the Church. In this condition he was saddled with all the tastes and traditions of the governing classes without the means of living up to them, and without the training and experience, to say nothing of the willingness, to enable him to make his way in trade. Trade, in short, was impossible. There remained politics and literature. To both these that unfortunate creature, Grantley Berkeley, turned his hand, but he soon had ample reason to know that desperation and need served as no substitute for talent, and with the earldom always just out of his grasp he dragged out an embittered existence sustained on the paltry income furnished by third-rate writing. He was to the end an aristocrat in his own opinion, but he could not induce the world to agree with him. That Lord George Bentinck did not go through something of the

same experience was due to his good fortune, that the Duke of Wellington came out so well he owed to his talents.

Whyte-Melville, though not himself one of these tragic victims, put the situation in the words of a keen observer in his first novel, *Digby Grand*.

“ How often do we see a youth, and more particularly the younger sons of the nobility, thrust upon the world in the falsest of all false positions—placed in a station which he has not the means of keeping up, and moving in a sphere whose necessary expenses must eventually entail ruin upon him. He has probably been educated at Eton or Harrow, with his brother the marquis, and when he came home for the holidays, either because he was mamma’s pet, or because he was better-looking or cleverer than the peer presumptive, he found himself in every respect quite as important a personage as his elder brother. He rode as good a pony, and rode him a turn harder ; was put into as ‘ warm a corner ’ by the keeper at his Grace’s lordly battues, and was in every respect on the same footing. So far so good ; it would be hard to make a distinction between boys, and it might, perhaps, be as bad for the elder as it would be wholesome preparatory training for the younger. But ere long the jacket is discarded for a tailed-coat, and there is a question of razors and a dressing-case. Then comes Oxford or Cambridge, and still the young one holds his senior a neck-and-neck race ; they are both ‘ tufts ’, and, as far as income goes, very much on a par, as they each run into debt pretty handsomely, as a matter of course, which debts the Duke, though not as a matter of course, pays. And now comes the tug-of-war,—now the younger lordling enters upon the world, armed indeed, generally speaking, with a frontlet of brass, but woefully deficient in the more valuable metal he has all his life been learning to squander so freely. ‘ Lord

of his presence and small land beside,'—what is called the best society, which his previous habits teach him to enjoy and appreciate. Pleasure is for a time a willing handmaid, and the butterfly frolics gaudily in the sun ; but, unfortunately, a day of reckoning must come ; the longest-suffering tradesmen like to be paid once in three years, and a creditor too often put off becomes at each postponement a more pitiless enemy. Our scion of nobility, like the child of toil, must be clothed and fed ; but what would be luxuries to the million are to him the necessities of life. It is as indispensable for him to be well dressed as it is for a man of middle station to be dressed at all ; and although he may feed at the mahogany, and repose on the mattresses, of another, yet he and his valet must move from Castle to Hall ; and posting is proverbially only to be effected by means of ready money.

“ Then, must he give up hunting, to which he has all his life been accustomed, because, forsooth, he cannot keep horses ?—brought up with the Racing Calendar and Stud Book at his fingers' ends, must he abjure the bracing heath and the velvet sward, over which he loves to see the favourite skimming like an arrow ? Must he be poisoned with rough, loaded port, to whom the clean and silky Chateau-Margaux is as mother's milk ?—or must he starve upon roast mutton, whose appetite has been hitherto appeased with *salmi de bécasses* ? No ; you cannot break through the habits of a lifetime with an effort : you cannot reclaim the eagle whose untamed youth has matured in his lofty eyrie, and lure him to your fist like a sparrowhawk ; neither can you expect that the young patrician, whose boyhood has been undisciplined and uncontrolled, shall suddenly assume with manhood those principles and habits which it costs years of self-denial to acquire. He will go on as he has begun, and when hopelessly involved, and irretrievably ruined, it will be well if he confine himself to preying upon the unoffending tradesman, and do not carry his depredations into the class of society to which he belongs.”

George Bernard Shaw has flung one of his fiery darts into this custom of sacrifice, from which it appears that he suffered at rather long range. His father was second cousin to a baronet and his mother the daughter of a country gentleman. Perhaps this may account for some of his famous sardonic bitterness at the former established order. It annoys him to hear self-made men, who started at the bottom and arrived at the top, boasting of their former misery. For real poverty, he suggests, one must be the younger son of a younger son of a younger son. One must start at the top with the tastes and traditions of the top but with the income of the bottom.<sup>1</sup> In short, the younger son of the nineteenth century did not, because he could not, accept the theory that he was thrown back into the pool, and he refused to play that game until he was obliged to do so by the relentless force of circumstances.

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For the fortunate ones who were not shouldered out of the nest, life was lived constantly in the public eye. The interesting psychology of aristocracy derived largely from this fact. The gentleman by birth occupied unavoidably, whether he liked it or no, the position of a Simeon Stylites, set up on a pillar where all the world

<sup>1</sup> George Bernard Shaw : *Immaturity* (Standard Edition, 1931), Preface, vi-vii.

could see him. His affairs were public affairs ; he was constantly open to inspection ; he was a member of "society", the doings of which, however trivial, were recorded ; while the important activities of the common man sank through the broad meshes of recorded history and subsided into the limbo of the irrecoverable thoughts, words, and deeds of the past. This public position, *ex officio* as it were, gave him a tone, a dignity, a sense of mastery. If he did not exactly live in an enemy country, he at least carried on his existence in the presence of a population which would readily—even gladly—note any weakness of character.

On this account, the country gentleman felt unceasingly the need of playing the game. One must never be a cad. As Calvin expected those predestined to salvation to demonstrate by their actions that they were indeed of the elect, so the squirearchs expected each other to show themselves gentlemen, lest they be confused with the vulgar crowd. Hence came all the code of honour, the snobbery, the arrogance to inferiors, the coldness, the constant care that no one should get above his station. The attitude had all the characteristics of a defensive psychological rationalization.

As would naturally be expected it was most evident in those persons who had the greatest need of it. These were the younger sons. Lord George Bentinck, who from his pursuits could

not avoid dealing with low characters, black-legs, touts, stable boys, had the reputation of being a cold uncommunicative aristocrat among those who did not know him well. It is said that he never allowed his betting agent to sit down in his presence. Grantley Berkeley every day of his life demonstrated his sensitiveness on the score of rank and his contempt of common people. By contrast John Bennet Lawes could indulge in, condescension without arrogance. But it was still condescension, however gracious.

Persons in trade, despite their constant infiltration upwards into the ranks of the titled, were always looked down upon as inferior beings and gained acceptance in terms of social equality only with the greatest difficulty. To embark upon trade and, above all, upon anything so low as retail business, had an immediate declassing effect, notwithstanding all the constant forcing of the superfluous gentlemen into just such pursuits. Despite all his apparent affability on the subject, Grantley Berkeley could not conceal his scorn of the sugar-grocer who came out to hunt with the Berkeley hounds.

Walter Brooke, wastrel younger son of the Brookes, in Whyte-Melville's *Brookes of Bridlemere*, gave expression to this attitude in no uncertain terms. " 'The fellow's a snob,' " he declared in reference to the irreproachable young brewer, who had aspirations, yet unavowed, to his sister's hand. " 'The governor used to be more

particular when we were boys. I don't mean to say there's any harm in Stoney ; but he's in trade, my good fellow, don't you see ? He's in trade ! ' ”

The inimitable Harriette Wilson, who considered herself a particularly choice article specially reserved for the delectation of aristocrats, tells in her memoirs of a certain Cornet Eversfield who had joined the regiment of her paramour of the moment.

“ A very fine young man, who had joined only a month previous, was present, and I remember that nobody said a single word to him. . . . I inquired his history, and was told that he was a man of good fortune, *but no family*, as they [the officers] denominate those who cannot boast recorded ancient blood in their veins. However, instead of complaining to the prince, or calling out the Colonel, he put a good face on the thing, and always came into the mess-room whistling. He was a very fine young man, and, while he carefully avoided any appearance of making up to his proud brother-officers, was ever ready to prove, by his politeness in handing them salt, bread, wine, or whatever happened to be near him at table, that he was not sufficiently wounded by their cutting to be sulky with them, neither was his appetite at all impaired by it. Of this fact, nobody in their senses could entertain the smallest doubt.”<sup>1</sup>

Even the coldness of the army caste, however, was not proof against Cornet Eversfield's invincible good humour and the fact that he rode a very beautiful horse and drove a very fine

<sup>1</sup> *Harriette Wilson's Memoirs of Herself and Others* (James Laver, ed., New York, 1929), 329-30.



tilbury. There was a little matter of ascertaining who made his vehicle and what price he would put upon his mount, and he had, therefore, to be spoken to. The ice being broken, the unfortunate young man, who, after all, had not been consulted in advance about his preference in the colour of his blood, soon became the fast friend of his fellow-officers. And this proves, if we are to believe the charming Harriette, "that, with perfect evenness of temper, and good-nature combined, a man of high independent spirit cannot fail to gain the good will of everybody around him."

The requirements of such a high code of appearances were too rigid to be thoroughly observed and many were the attempts of country gentlemen to escape from their public character. This same Harriette Wilson in her memoirs opens up a whole demi-monde of relaxation in which those of the ruling class who spent their time in London sloughed off in a measure the necessity of remaining always on good behaviour.

The illicit connections of young aristocrats were taken with some equanimity, at least in the early decades of the century, so long as they retained a purely informal character. When they approached the stage of introducing low-born women into the upper classes, however, it was time to call a decided halt. No better illustration of this could be given than the relations of Harriette with Lord Worcester. The

Duke and Duchess of Beaufort, while certainly not welcoming the affair, were able to endure it with some calm until marriage appeared in the offing. Then, at once, their attitude changed to one of undisguised concern and it became a cause of great fright to Worcester's uncle, who thought, as Harriette says, that "we were really married". For some, no doubt, horse racing and its associations supplied something of the same escape. But in the main it is still true that the price of membership in the governing class was snobbery or what looked very much like it to the mass of people.

None the less the landed aristocracy, from the highest nobility down to the humble squire and his family, set the tone of society, both in town and country. The assiduity with which Squire Lawes attended church has nothing to do with his convictions on religious subjects, but simply with his concern for public morality and order. The church, being an established institution, in some measure a creation of the government, naturally commanded that patronage from the superior elements of the population which would ensure it the respect of the inferior. The Duke of Wellington, when resident in the country, made it a point of principle as well as religion to lend the countenance of his regular presence at services, because, as he explained to one of the multitude of his correspondents, "my presence at church can operate as an example".

As the upper class set the tone for the lower, so the nobility, and particularly the dukes, the marquesses, and earls, set the tone for the gentry. If the great ones did not contribute to the local charities and almshouses, if they did not attend the county meetings, if they did not show an interest in the business of local administration, lesser ones were likely to conclude that such activities were not "the right things to do".

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It was on the national scene of government that the landed classes made themselves most conspicuous. Politics was pre-eminently their sphere of action. Political life swarmed with them and the House of Lords had no one else.

"We are peers of highest station,  
Paragons of legislation,  
Pillars of the British nation!"

Nor did that venerable House, rooted in the magnum concilium of Norman kings, flowered in the baronage of Magna Carta, and seeded in the Tudor and Stuart centuries, constitute merely a hoary and useless relic of the past. It retained a lusty vigour. Its hard, wooden bulk provided a refuge, a wind-break, well through the Victorian century. Small wonder that proponents of middle-class rule like John Bright, thundered against it, and threatened, as Bright did in 1884, to cut it down. The Duke of Wellington might observe to Creevey deploringly that "Nobody

cares a damn for the House of Lords ; the House of Commons is everything in England, and the House of Lords nothing," but he was manifestly varying from the strict truth.

Still, if his remark had been true the country gentlemen nevertheless had wide scope for their best talents in the House of Commons. And if they fought a losing battle there, they were yet able to carry on not unsuccessful rearguard actions through the century. The fruit of government is office ; the Church, the administrative departments, the ranks of imperial and diplomatic service throughout a world-encircling empire, and, above all, the positions of command in the army were filled with those for whom it was necessary to provide. In a class where, as in any aristocracy, the traditions of warfare were strong, the army especially provided a haven for surplus man-power. As the incursions of an upstarting bourgeoisie increased—although it may appear when a more careful study of the landed classes has been made (not the least task which confronts the present generation of historians) that the incursions have not been so great as has sometimes been supposed—commissions in the army supplied a gratifying exclusiveness hardly to be found elsewhere in the public service. The navy, associated from the beginning with merchantry, did not have this character. And the cream of the army in this connection was to be found in those crack

regiments, such as the Coldstream Guards, which garrisoned the Tower and provided the pageantry of royalty. Here the officers were, almost to a man, gentlemen of quality. For many this army career served as a kind of education. “ ‘I never meant to make the army my profession,’ ” said Harriette Wilson’s Lord Worcester ; “ ‘neither did my father desire it ; but he conceives that every young man is the better for having seen a year or two of service.’ ” And he agreed, if we may believe his charmer, because he thought “ ‘the becoming uniform of the Tenth’ ” might make him more attractive to her.

For the most part men of this order, being men of affairs, whether statesmen, bureaucrats, warriors, or mere local squires, were not scholars. A certain procedure of education they recognized as standard, but for the mass of them—if one may think of a mass in their connection—it amounted to very little. It began formally at Eton or some other public school, where the classics were drilled into uncomprehending young gentlemen as the beginning and end of all wisdom. Whether under the supervision of the terrible flogging tyrant Keate in the early days of the century or under some more humane Arnold of Rugby the effect was not very remarkable in terms of learning. All too often, as was said about early nineteenth century Eton, “it was a battle between Eton and education and Eton had won”.

The next step was the University, Oxford or Cambridge. Yet it is surprising how unnecessary this was. Lord George Bentinck had no schooling except what was provided by a tutor; Grantley Berkeley was satisfied with Sandhurst; the Duke of Richmond with Westminster School. For the young men destined to the clergy education took a more serious cast; for the others it provided Latin and Greek tags useful in public life and conversation and not much else besides the stamp of the social class. This last was perhaps the most important contribution of the schools and universities for those who received it. The indelible imprint of the gentleman and the collective impression of the traditions of his class were carried away and preserved while the lessons of the schoolroom were forgotten. But as for scholars . . .

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In a way it was only in rural scenes that the squire appeared in his real character. There he *was* completely the country gentleman, not merely a gentleman from the country. As was not so completely the case in town, in the neighbourhood of his seat he and his fellows held almost complete sway. Whether duke or something much less they set the tone of everything from church to agriculture, from morality to turnips. This they knew full well and much that was

irksome did they endure for appearance sake. Not least of their ordeals they found in the annual County Ball, of which Whyte-Melville has given us two revealing representations. His description in *Digby Grand* he has prefaced with these remarks :

“ This ball, be it understood, was a yearly penance, undergone by the nobility, gentry, and squirearchy of —shire, with a fortitude and resignation worthy of a better cause. That their presence in the county assembly-rooms—a spacious structure, erected over the gaol, where the votaries of Terpsichore disturbed with their revels the gloomy malefactor in his cell—was a voluntary discipline of the severest order, I gather from the fact that, excepting some of the youngest of the very young ladies, I never heard anyone put in a good word for the unfortunate ball. ‘ It was a bore—it was a nuisance—the rooms were always hot, and the weather always cold—the passages were ill-lighted, and the moon sure to be off duty—all the roads in the vicinity were bad, and as for the music—don’t talk of the music ! ’ But notwithstanding all these drawbacks, long consultations as to the propriety of attending were invariably wound up with the annual ‘ however, I suppose we *must* go ’ ; and this ideal obligation served to bring a very considerable number of white satin shoes and snowy neckcloths to assist at the festival.”

And so the affair took place, despite clouds, rain, cold, bad roads, breakdowns, fears for the morrow’s hunting, contempt for anything less resplendent than a London assembly in the season. The aloofness of the gentlefolk at one end of the room, as described by Whyte-Melville in *The Brookes of Bridlemere*, and the bad champagne could not compete with the infectious sociability

engendered by such an occasion and it accomplished, no doubt, the purpose for which it was intended, a ratification of the existing social system.

From their position in life the squirearchs could not confine themselves to the social amenities. Those who did not shirk their public obligations—and some did except when they found themselves immediately and personally concerned—had ample scope for their industry. Were they not almost monarchs of their estates and the surrounding neighbourhood? And did not the estates of some of the greater nobility among them make their possessors, willy nilly, responsible for the welfare of thousands of people? Social conditions, charity, morals, education, every kind of activity affecting the happiness of those dependent upon them demanded attention. The work of local government, taxation, regulations, and law enforcement was likewise theirs.

It was to the commission of the peace that the gentleman owed his legal power to administer most of the local government. Had some wretch carried off a rail from a farmer's gate or a turnip from his field? He was brought before the Justice of the Peace and his case despatched with commendable promptitude. Had the gamekeeper captured a poacher in the act of removing a hare from a spring in the hedge? The Justice of the Peace disposed of him in short order. For the purposes of many small cases he required the



assistance of a fellow magistrate. More important affairs were handled by the Justices of the Peace for the whole county assembled in Quarter Sessions, and business there was not confined to the decisions of justice but extended through the whole range of county administration.

No doubt many of these local magistrates would have cut a sorry figure as judge in any higher court. It was small training that most of them had in the law. A well-worn Blackstone on their shelves, Burn's *Justice of the Peace*, a collection or two of statutes on particular subjects, such as the Game Laws, sufficed for the rough justice meted out by gentlemen-born to persons of small consequence. If serious questions arose a Clerk usually stood at elbow to advise, and, after all, unless public agitation on a particular question happened to turn attention to them, most mistakes never came to light. On at least one occasion the Home Office in London checked up on summary convictions under the Game Laws, with interesting results, and cautioned against an excessive use of rule-of-thumb methods. Generally, however, no such supervision was dreamed of.

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On the whole, the wonder is that an unpaid magistracy, whose real interest lay in administration rather than judgment, and who had to

face all the demands involved in caring for large estates, did so well. A conscientious gentleman like the Duke of Richmond became a slave to the duties imposed upon him by his position. And indeed at a time when the new Poor Law of 1834, by establishing new Boards of Guardians not necessarily dominated by the magistrates, was opening the way for a diffusion of county administration, Richmond still regarded the condition of the poor as so much a matter of his own responsibility that he became, as has been seen, chairman of the Westhampnett Guardians.

The industry and application of a conscientious squire is well indicated in Whyte-Melville's description of Sir Harry Beverley's business room :

"At Beverley Manor there were plenty of rooms, cheerful, airy, and well-proportioned, in which it would have been a pleasure to live, but none of these were chosen by Sir Harry for his own ; disregarding the charms of the salon, the drawing-room, the morning-room, the billiard-room, and the hall itself, which, with a huge fire-place and a thick carpet, was by no means the least comfortable part of the house,—he had retired to a small, ill-contrived, queer-shaped apartment, dark, dusty, and uncomfortable, of which the only recommendation was that it communicated directly with a back-staircase and offices, and did not require in its own untidiness any apology on the part of muddy visitors, who had not thought of wiping their boots and shoes as they came up . . . . In the centre of the room was fixed a large leather-covered writing-table, and at this table sat Sir Harry himself, prepared to administer justice and punish all offenders."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Interpreter*, 55-6.

Sir Harry was surrounded by indications of his varied activities. His "instrument for measuring land, and a roll of plans by which acres were to be calculated and a system of thorough draining established, with a view to golden profits" stood in one corner to testify to his agricultural pursuits, as did his coloured engraving on the wall, representing "the well-known Beverley shorthorn 'Dandy.'" And the large gun case, the bookshelves which showed the *Racing Calendar* and Hawker's *Instructions to Young Sportsmen*, the whip-stand with knotted dog-whip, long-thonged hunting whip, and the jockey's wicked "cut-and-thrust" signified other interests of hardly less importance. For the country gentleman was, indeed, a jack-of-all-trades, expected like a statesman to be omniscient and capable in the business of everybody else at the same time that he looked after his own. Such must always be the life of the benevolent despot.

In his personal affairs he was first of all a man of property. When, through the operation of the institution of primogeniture, the fate of the younger son fell to his lot, he thereby set out on the road which promised to take him or his descendants into another class of society, although for the time being he retained the instincts, traditions, and attitudes of the owners of land. As a landowner the gentleman, however profligate he might be, possessed usually the most highly developed conception of the rights of

property. The privileged position of the French aristocracy did not develop in England but those privileges which did exist, the sinecures, the pre-eminence of the gentry in government, the rotten boroughs, the Church livings, were so much property. However great the public need, there was a very prevalent feeling in 1832 that pocket boroughs ought not to be abolished without compensation. The Lennox family's right to the duty on coal imported into London was compounded for at a good round sum. Ridiculous or not, property rights were sacred. Naturally, therefore, the law of Nature, doctrines of equalitarianism, hopes of democracy stank in aristocratic nostrils. Said Wellington in 1831 :

" A democracy has never been established in any part of the world, that it has not immediately declared war against property—against the payment of the public debt—and against all the principal objects of the British Constitution, as it now exists. Property and its possessions will become the common enemy."

Such a view bears the character of an exaggeration, perhaps, and it might be excused in one who at this period seems to have read nothing but Blackstone, but it was not an uncommon attitude. When John Stuart Mill declared that " The earth is the inheritance of the human race, and a large proportion of that race has been disinherited," he only expressed the conclusion implicit in the very logic against which the Duke was declaiming.

The prime requisite, then, for a country gentleman was land, either the possession of it, or prospects of it, or some close connection with it. The first concern of Sir Robert Peel's father, in making good his entrance into the ruling class, was the acquisition of an estate, and the manor of Drayton accordingly came into the hands of the Peel family. At the height of the Duke of Wellington's glory Parliament found it natural to vote large sums to him "for the purchase of estates". It was from these resources that the conqueror was enabled to secure his famous Hampshire seat of Stratfield Saye.

As landowners the gentlemen identified themselves with what had always been the safest, surest, and most conservative of investments but by no means with the most efficient of industries. Agriculture depends so much upon the chances of the season and the intricacies of the laws which govern growing things that it is hard to distinguish the times when it suffers from bad management from those when it is merely unfortunate; but assuredly, until the founding of the Royal Agricultural Society in 1838, the culture of the land had fallen on days of sloth and neglect. The Tulls, Townsends, and Bakewells were no more. The easy assurance of a protective tariff relieved the pressure of a world market. Nor had even the ideas of the eighteenth century reformers gained the general acceptance which the attention given them would lead one to expect. At any

rate James Caird investigating for the *London Times* in 1851 could still find the most unadulterated medievalism within a few miles of Brighton.

That there were new ideas afloat Whyte-Melville's Colonel Belmont seemed in his vague way to suspect when he announced that "turnips might be grown the size of his head on light land, or red land, or some other kind of land, by applying a certain compost made of sundry costly articles, but which must pay in the long run, as had been proved by a millionaire on an experimental farm.' " For it was a recognized duty of the country gentleman, from the highest duke down to the most modest squire who let his land to a few tenant farmers, to show an interest in the art of cultivating the soil. Many of them, no doubt, had the very haziest notions of what it was all about. They were fortunate if their tenants did not soon ruin them. But they realized that it was "the thing to do" to have at least some lingo of the farmyard on their tongues, to discourse of improvements, and to give prizes—and compete for prizes—at the county shows. They were all by their station in life patrons of agriculture—because they were also its beneficiaries.

Still, not with all did agricultural interest bear the character of mere formality. Did not the eighth Duke of Devonshire declare that the proudest moment of his life "was when my pig

won the first prize at Skipton Fair ” ? Many of the home farms on landed estates were farmed more or less devotedly by their owners and were regarded as models for tenants, not always very tractable, to imitate. Perhaps the most successful of the gentlemen farmers who punctuate the pages of James Caird’s agricultural survey was Philip Pusey. The brother of Edward Bouverie Pusey of Oxford Movement fame, he was born, in 1799, heir to the Berkshire estate of his father, to which he succeeded at the age of twenty-eight. Despite the demands of varied interests, for he was a Member of Parliament, an active promoter of Agricultural Bills in the House of Commons, Editor of the *Journal* of the Royal Agricultural Society, a connoisseur of art, and a hymn writer, he made his five thousand acre estate, and particularly the home farm of some three hundred acres, one of the best known agricultural enterprises in the country. Not only did he conduct a variety of experiments and trials of agricultural machinery but he set up a system of water-meadows which represented the most advanced practice of his day. To tenants and labourers, for the latter of whom he supplied model cottages designed by a noted architect, he proved a generous and understanding landlord. Nor did these enterprises represent merely the effects of a distant finance and control. When in the country, he rose at dawn and superintended personally the operations carried on

on his farm. Such energy produced a stimulating effect for many miles round about, and the farmers profited by his successes, particularly with machines, to introduce some improvements of their own.

Whyte-Melville gives us a glimpse of one of the farming gentlemen at his work :

“His lordship [Lord Waywarden] was over his gaiters in the rich yellow straw. His farm-book was under his arm, his pencil between his teeth. He was engaged in the congenial operation of poking and punching a fat bullock about the tail, to ascertain the beast's chance of an agricultural prize.”

For somehow the Bakewell tradition, whether because of a natural human interest in animals or because the breeding of prize stock afforded the most convenient medium for agricultural competition, had a stronger hold on these men than did the mere raising of crops.

“ ‘ I've a black sow I should like to show you,’ said Waywarden, ‘ that's as sure of the gold medal as if she had it round her neck. Look at her ! Fair Rosamond, my bailiff calls her. There I think you'll allow I've bred a beauty at last ! ’

“ Fair Rosamond, who was all throat and paunch, with a delicate little snout and eyes choked in fat, gave no symptoms of vitality beyond a stertorous snore, and looked indeed, as if she must die of sheer apoplexy before the day of the show.”<sup>x</sup>

Little record persists of such activities as these of Lord Waywarden—though we catch a glimpse of Lord Althorp counting sheep, the Duke of

<sup>x</sup> *The Brookes of Bridlemere*, 271.



Devonshire rejoicing over his prize pig, and the Duke of Richmond proudly exhibiting to a fellow enthusiast his precious flock of Southdowns—but it is no insignificant fact that so many of the great ones lived so close to the soil.

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If the residence of the squirearchy on their country estates had depended solely upon an interest in agriculture it is to be feared that England would have experienced much more absenteeism than she did. But country life had other attractions of no mean sort. London, Bath, Brighton, the Continent palled in time when contrasted with the air, the simplicity, the quiet, the views, and the amusements of more retired places. Country ideals, to be sure, called for a more Spartan taste than the town. They gave in return the flavour of old rambling manor houses, the sense of antiquity and peace, and the feeling of permanence which can only come from ancient halls decorated with frowning ancestral portraits.

Our novelist has painted for us an unvarnished picture of just such a place in the manor house of Bridlemere, starting with the “wood fire, glowing and crackling under the ample chimney-piece of the old library”.

“The old library that—because it had never been intended for the purpose—had gradually become the favourite sitting-room of the whole house. It was very lofty, with deep narrow windows, looking on a little

sheltered flower-garden, with oak floor and wainscoting ; with a ceiling in sufficiently bad taste, on which the different coats-of-arms of the Brookes were picked out in scarlet and gold—perhaps I ought to say, ‘gules and or’. The book-cases at Bridlemere were not so well furnished as the cellars ; and large gaps on their shelves, which should have been filled with intellectual food, were littered with fly-hooks, fishing-tackle, work-boxes, back-gammon boards, battle-dores, shuttlecocks, and such miscellaneous articles as are apt to accumulate in any large room of a country house to which young ladies and gentlemen habitually resort. Bridlemere was an overgrown, old-fashioned building—partly of the Restoration, partly of Queen Anne’s time—and had little pretension to regularity of architecture or arrangement. The dining-room was the smallest and the worst on the ground floor ; the drawing-room the prettiest and the coldest. The best bed-rooms were ghostly, and uncomfortable to a degree—much too large, and in sad want of new furniture ; while in the ‘Bachelor’s Gallery’, as it was called, a guest might find himself in the cosiest and neatest of retreats, bright with French paper and flowering chintz, replete with every appliance for cleanliness and comfort, fragrant with the woodbine that trailed and twined about the window, and commanding an uninterrupted view of the tops of some elms, an ivy-covered tower, and the broad face of the stable clock. It is pleasant to lie in bed in such a room as this, and watch the rooks wheeling against an April sky ; listening to their cawing through the open window, and looking forward to a day of happy country idleness—only happy and enjoyable when earned by a previous period of honest anxiety and toil. Below stairs, doubtless, Bridlemere was cheerful enough—the servants took care of that. For good fires and strong tea, commend me to the steward’s room and the servants’ hall ; but, certainly, the darkest and gloomiest apartment in the whole house was that in which the family chose habitually to reside.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Brookes of Bridlemere*, 27-8.

Whether the manor house afforded the comparative simplicity and the mingled comfort-discomfort of Bridlemere or the gorgeous magnificence of Goodwood House the life lived in it was that of the superior beings of the world. Servants waited at beck and call. Dinner, eaten from more or less heavy plate, with wine more or less choice, served by a butler, himself more or less imposing as circumstances dictated, stamped the diners as those for whom the best was reserved. Venison, pheasant, or other game was their peculiar food, which common men could hope to eat only on the rarest occasions.

To the socially inclined the greatest drawback of the country lay in its loneliness. Only this accounts for the determined visiting habits so vividly described in the Jane Austen novels of the opening of the century. From these the tradition of English country-house parties has come down to later generations, not troubled by the still wretched roads and hardly less uncomfortable railways of early Victorian days. Charles Greville, the diarist, must have spent years of his life on the road from one country house to another. And when he arrived he unfailingly found a varied gathering of the important gentlemen and ladies of his day indulging in the pleasures and entertainment which such places afforded, the horse racing, the field sports, the riding, or the games of an

humbler sort. And everywhere there were relatives, near and distant. For, as ladies and gentlemen married only gentlemen and ladies, the inter-relationships wove an intricate web of connections until it seemed almost impossible for a man of quality to discover another with whom he had no blood or marriage tie. The Berkeleys were connected with the Lennoxes the Lennoxes with the Bentincks.

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As relatives, especially if not too close or too distant, notoriously despise each other, the entertainment took the form of something more than mere idle chatter. Over and above everything else the great social attraction of the country lay in the sports of shooting, hunting, and horse racing. Until 1831 the shooting of game had by law been expressly reserved to persons of property. The Statute of 1671<sup>1</sup> which had fixed the game qualification excluded everyone except persons receiving an income of one hundred pounds (half as much again in the case of long leaseholds) a year from land, and their heirs. By the letter of the law younger sons were excluded, but the intention was so obviously to give the sporting rights to the landed classes that they habitually shot without hindrance. Surrounding this privilege, one of the few

<sup>1</sup> 22-3 Car. II, c. 25.

definitely class laws in England, there had grown up a centuries-old code of Game Laws, particularly with regard to poaching, which occupied no small portion of the time and attention of the country magistrates. The crowning jewel in this coronet was the old statute which altogether prohibited the sale of game. Since game could not come legitimately upon the market no one could have it except possessors of landed estates and their friends who had the good fortune to receive a brace of hares as a present.

Such a game system, denying satisfaction as it did to the appetites of increasingly numerous town-dwellers, could not continue long in the age of bourgeois liberalism. The illicit traffic in game suggests the equally illicit traffic in certain potable liquors in another country a century later. It mounted to enormous dimensions until, after long debate, there remained no one prepared to deny the necessity for reform. But, strange to say, the more the sporting privileges as such were abolished the more they persisted in practical fact. The large landed estates still existed and while they existed the owners could exploit them as they pleased by preserving game and reserving to themselves the amusement of killing it. It booted little to the townsman that under the Game Act of 1831 he could take out a game certificate—and at the same cost as the highest lord—if he could not go where the game was to be found.

Despite their sacrifice of legal exclusiveness, therefore, the country gentlemen kept the sport in their own hands. Theirs was the keen joy of the stubble in the morning sun, the disciplined, intelligent pointer standing like a statue, with one foot raised and snuffing in the scent of feathered prey, the quick rise of the birds, and the crashing report of the fowling piece which brought them down. To the old style of sportsman the dog was as indispensable as the gun, and many a loving companionship grew up on the basis of co-operation in the field. But since the beginning of the century a new shooting sport had become fashionable which made the pointer less necessary. In the battue human mongrels, called beaters, were employed to drive game to waiting gentlemen. With beaters in front and loaders behind ready to hand them their recharged guns as rapidly as they could be let off, the business of shooting became a very simple—and destructive—affair for those who pulled the trigger.

It involved nevertheless a very considerable amount of expense and care in preparation. High preservation, requiring the services of gamekeepers who were guards and gamekeepers who were nurses of the pheasants, partridges, and hares, the accumulation of vast quantities of game by means of hatching eggs, feeding the pheasants in winter, destroying vermin, the utmost vigilance against marauding gangs of poachers, became the first care of many a

gentleman who prided himself on being able to show his friends a good head of game when they visited him. And woe to the poacher. For there was no doubt that the game now, being an expensively and artificially reared product, was essentially private property. Only a few old-fashioned sportsmen ever thought of trusting to the natural increase of game and even they could not free themselves from the artificiality of supply. The simple fact was that but for high preservation there would hardly have been enough game anywhere to repay the trouble of seeking.

The great advantage of the battue lay in its social character. From the fashionable party adorned by Peel, or Wellington, or Prince Albert, who bagged hundreds of head of game, down to the more modest drive of lesser squires, the shoot gathered together gentlemen in a pleasant competitive rivalry. If the battue did not require any skill in finding the game—in the words of the day it was “brought to the gun” and sportsmen had only to wait for it—it did at least provide ample contest in marksmanship. In the grouse moors of the North and, as the century wore on and technique improved, in the drives of high pheasants no mean skill was required. The varieties of this sport can be seen in Whyte-Melville’s description :

“There had been a *battue* at Bridlemere that day—not one of your pounding, slaughtering, cannonading attacks, resembling a general action in all but the small

proportion of those who run away ; when, to enjoy the sport—if such it can be called—dandies come down from London with all the modern improvements in dress, arms, and accoutrements, for the express purpose of learning how often they can pull their triggers within a given number of hours. If they shoot straight, and obtain an enormous bag, so much the better ; but the great thing is to let the gun off at the utmost possible rate of rapidity and repetition. When the colonel is sent forward with one breech-loader in his hand, and two more carried by his attendants (six barrels in all), so that he can never be for an instant unprepared ; when My Lord, with his legs very wide apart, stands like a colossus in a ride, and while

‘Slides the bird o’er lustrous woodland,’

misses *rocket* after *rocket*, with increasing impatience and disgust ; when gentlemen’s gentlemen, sighing for the warmth of the castle, and the luxuries of ‘the room’, load for their masters with a gracious carelessness, not always quite safe for the sportsman, but assumed by the valet as if he were performing the mere everyday duties of the toilet ; when the Duke, at the close of day, apologizes to his guests for the badness of the sport, and condoles them that they have only averaged some two hundred head per gun ! No ; the *battue* at Bridlemere was nothing of this sort, but a cosy little affair of eighty cock-pheasants, and twice that number of hares and rabbits, equally enough distributed amongst half-a-dozen people, who shot well and fairly, without more jealousy than was desirable in order that each man should do his best. There was a pretty range of copsewood, skirting a warm and sheltered dingle, to shoot in the forenoon ; a capital luncheon, with strong home-brewed, at two o’clock ; and a good deal of sport afterwards in the fox-covert, which afforded, in addition to a woodcock, the cheering sight of a brace of the wild and wily animals, to the preservation of which it was specially devoted.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Brookes of Bridlemere*, 3.



Every country gentleman, then, shot, and was concerned seriously with the preservation of game. Lord Palmerston almost lost his life by a spring gun, set to catch poachers in Epping Forest. And did not Gladstone, in token of his position among the landed classes, sacrifice a finger in a gun accident?

But if everyone could shoot, not everyone could engage in the somewhat more arduous pursuit of hunting. And yet it is astonishing what a popularity this sport enjoyed. It was almost a matter of course that every gentleman hunted if he physically could. Arthur Balfour marked himself an original when he asked "Why should I break my neck merely because a pack of hounds choose to follow a bad stink?" For every other creature connected with the fox hunt there was a special term, from the hunter which carried the sportsmen to the huntsman who managed the hounds and the whippers-in who assisted him. But the gentleman, unless he boasted the proud right to call himself M.F.H., was merely a gentleman. That he hunted, his position in society implied.

The fox was the quarry pre-eminent. It is true that the chase of the deer outlasted the century, that the Royal Buckhounds were not abolished until the death of Queen Victoria, and that the chase of the wild stag and hind has survived in the wild parts of the south-west; but it was a decadent sport generally in the

nineteenth century. Grantley Berkeley's boisterous calf-hunting around Cranford House was an anachronism. Coursing and hare hunting had their devotees, too, making an especial appeal to those less lusty and vigorous who found the five-barred gates, the blackthorn fences with two ditches, the brooks with treacherous banks, and the terrific pace required by the fox too much for them. Not everyone had the fanatical persistence of Lord Chaplin, who hunted as long as a horse could be found to support his corpulence.

Like game, the vermin fox had to be preserved in order to maintain an adequate supply. Like the hare and the pheasant, the fox became in a measure a sacred animal. Of the seven deadly sins to a country gentleman the worst was to shoot a fox. Did a gamekeeper know to a certainty that Reynard was feasting on his pheasants? Nevertheless he must bear it with what fortitude he could muster. Old Halfcock, Squire Brooke's keeper, "never trapped a fox in his life, though, with the perverse instinct of a gamekeeper, he would have been only too glad of the chance, for well he knew that such an offence against the Squire's standing orders would be his first and last."

The meet being advertised the gentlemen gathered at the cover in a flutter of excitement, prepared to take advantage of the keeper's restraint. The hounds were thrown in to make

their find. More likely than not they were a subscription pack, maintained on a co-operative basis, like the Oakley hounds which Grantley Berkeley hunted. For the fast and furious packs of the nineteenth century required too great an expenditure for more than a very few individuals to be able to support it alone. Reynard being routed from his place of concealment a mad rush took place, everyone striving to head the field, live with the hounds, and be in at the death. If, as not infrequently happened, a couple of hundred horsemen had attended the meet it was likely to prove a sad day for the meadows, gates, and hedges. At all cost they must crash through or over. A ducking in the stream, a fall at a fence came as a penalty for the unskilful. At the end, for those few who could manage to reach it safely, there was the glorious who-whoop as the fox was broken up by the hounds. The glory of it consisted not in the death of the fox nor only in the exhilaration of a break-neck ride across country but in a sense of victory over one's fellows. For once at least the man in at the death had shown himself better than many another strapping, hardy, reckless fellow who had been distanced.

There was another joy in the hunt, too. Few pleasures have been discovered to rival the satisfaction derived from hurrying across country upon a powerful animal under the control of the rider, moving in sympathy with his commands,

and accepting his dictation. The Englishman of the present age, as then, loves his dog. In those days he also loved his horse. The hunt was as much a rivalry of horses as of riders. A near relative, with the fox left out, was to be found in the steeplechase ; and this was but a form of horse-racing.

Gentlemen did not so exclusively monopolize horse-racing as they did hunting, perhaps, but without them it would have been nothing. They had established its traditions, they supplied most of the horses which competed, and through that very English institution the Jockey Club they controlled the conditions at Newmarket, which served as the model for all racing centres. In short, they *were* the Turf. The Betting Ring admitted very few who were not persons of quality, and only when upstarts had established a reputation for the generous gambling necessary to meet the betting offers of their social superiors. For betting came to constitute the principal interest of the racecourse for most persons.

Some raced merely from a love of horses and the pleasure of competitive breeding. The Duke of Richmond was one of these, thinking of his prize sheep and winning colts in the same light. But the Lord Glasgows, the Admiral Rouses, the Bentincks gave the Turf its own proper flavour. They raised up the horde of blacklegs and touts and made honest trainers almost impossible. Gambling, of course, has its own history as old

as the human race and was to be found in many other departments of Georgian and Victorian life, even in the rivalry of the battue. But it cannot be denied that horse racing vied with outright games of chance for the honour of ruining the fortunes of gay young gentlemen who had more confidence in chance and their own peculiar mathematics than the law of Nature allows to go unpunished.

Horse-racing, therefore, next to politics, shooting, and hunting, took place as one of the great absorbing subjects of country house conversation. To have the latest information from the stables about the sure thing aroused as much excitement as a pair of sparkling young female eyes. To win the Derby, the Oaks, the St. Leger, to accumulate a collection of heavy ornate plate embellished with models of jockeys, and whips, and horses, to carry out some not altogether nice but successful coup in the manipulation of the odds put one in the realm of the heroes of the day. And if in the end England benefited by a better breed of horses, was that not a sufficient justification for the filth of the Turf?

There was nothing which country gentlemen could so readily justify as their sports. Sentimental bourgeois could be found who sniffed at the idle careering about the country of reckless young men riding to hounds. They thought it a waste of time and wealth that a gentleman should devote land to game preservation, to a stable

full of hunters, or to the highly questionable pursuits of the racecourse. And, declared the humanitarians, sports were cruel. The fox, the hare, the carted deer, what suffering they endured ! Indeed, the humanitarians finally hounded the Royal Buckhounds to death as an extravagant anachronism.

To all this criticism the country gentleman had very telling replies. Hunting gave England the manliest and healthiest aristocracy in the world. It supplied the best possible school for cavalry leaders. The Duke of Wellington always chose hunting men for his officers. Racing improved the breed of horses. As for waste, not only did a man have the right to do what he pleased with his own property, but it was clear that sport, and particularly game preservation, gave employment to many people in the country areas at a time when the only alternative was a great increase in the distress of the poor.

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And so the squirearchs, who could always win an argument with anything except an economic fact, went their complacent way. In a sense they were an anachronism, which is to say, the personification of tradition. When that basic necessity of civilization, the maintenance of order, had had the standing of an ever-conscious need, they had served society in an obvious manner because they had supplied

more than any other class the element of stability. In the bourgeois century they persisted by the force of inertia, and they did so despite an apparent disappearance of their necessity. This disappearance, however, was only in part real. Rural England still retained more than a little of its medieval flavour. It still needed what they had to offer, even if the town did not.

To the growing importance of the town they were adjusting themselves throughout the century. Old types, the Squire Westerns of Victorian days, were being superseded by newer men who shifted the emphasis of life as time required. Sir John Lawes typifies these, cultivating the fields of industrial manufacture, making his compromise with an urban civilization, but at the same time refusing to uproot himself from the soil.

When prolonged agricultural depression set in during the decade of the 'seventies, the death sentence of the old country gentlemen, decreed in the mills of Manchester, written in the repeal of the Corn Laws, was finally signed. With the new men, the bankers, the brokers, the brewers, the mill-owners, who played at the old profession of squire in their spare time, who came down to the country to shoot in September, who rode out by train from town to the covert-side, and who returned to live the life of absentees in the counting houses of the cities—with these lay the future, such as it was. The old families did not

die out. They compromised, or went under. With most of them there was no other alternative. The stag was at bay.

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